

## MISS SLIMMENS'S BOARDING-HOUSE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE TALLOW FAMILY."

(Continued from page 443.)



### CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT THE HEART OF A MAIDEN SAID TO A  
 YOUNG MAN.

LINES DEDICATED TO EDGAR CLARENCE E——.

TELL me not in mournful members  
 Life is but an empty stream ;  
 In my bosom glows its embers,  
 And things are not what they seem.

All those thought-distracting tresses  
 Round thy classic profile wreath,  
 Fan thy brow with soft caresses,  
 Kiss the cheeks that blush beneath.

Life is earnest, life is real,  
 And the grave is not a jail ;  
 Thou fitt'st my heart's sublime ideal  
 Full, as fountains fill a pail.

Art is long and charms are fleeting—  
 Rome was built not in a day—  
 Like a drum my heart is beating,  
 Like a flute my pulses play.

Oh, my Edgar Clarence! darling!  
 What's the apex of my life?  
 To comb that silken hair's ensnaring,  
 To feed thy lips, to be *thy wife*.

Yet I'd die ere I would say it—  
 Lest thou scorn her love and slight her ;  
 Yes! she'd die ere she'd betray it,  
 Who it was that is the writer.

Thou shalt never guess the being  
 Perched upon love's eagle eyrie,  
 Like the timid wild fawn fleeing,  
 Never know her name's Al——.

Not engagement, and not sorrow  
 Is our inclined end or way,  
 But to act that each to-morrow  
 Finds us nearer than to-day.

Eyes as black as elderberries,  
 Hands as small as any girl's,  
 Lips as dulcet red as cherries,  
 Rosy cheeks, and silky curls!

Is it any special wonder  
 Thy attractions I adore,  
 That I tune my lyre to ponder  
 On the in—some one's bodoor?

No, it is not! No resistance  
 Can subdue my youthful heart!  
 Time, nor tide, nor scorn, nor distance  
 Can my thoughts from Edgar part!

Go, thou peerless one! get married!  
 Thou shalt never, never know,  
 Even when she is dead and buried,  
 What fond girl adored thee so.

Go, get married! press another  
 To thy wildly heaving breast!  
 Her sensations she will smother,  
 In *the grave* she'll soon find rest!

Go and wed! she will not hinder,  
 Travelling up life's stormy stair,  
 Though another, from her window,  
 Seeks thy innocence to snare.

Go, forget me! and to-morrow  
 Smile on other maids that smile!  
 Think not of Al——'s sorrow,  
 Yonder dim and distant isle.

Only one thing I desire thee—  
 Leave a curl of thy sweet hair  
 To be buried with Al——  
 In the grave of her despair.

### CHAPTER XIV.

HOPE ON, HOPE EVER.

If ever there was a mortal transported to  
 another spear of infinitesimal delight, it's me,  
 myself, Alvira Slimmens. He says that he  
 loves me! he has responded to that poetry, in a  
 manner so sweet, so subduing, so gratuitous!  
 But I must recall my senses, I must live over  
 again, in reflection, the happiness that was

mine, only last evening. Last evening, my hand nestled in his'n, my head reposed upon his shoulder, his curls brushed my cheek as he whispered—what's that, Caturah? I don't care. Tell her to get anything she's a mind to. Put on pound-cake and preserves, only don't bother me—clear out! I can't and won't be disturbed when I'm making up my house-keeping accounts. There! I've shut and locked the door, and I'll see if I can have a minute's peace of mind. What do I care what they get for tea? I wouldn't care if I never eat anything again as long as I lived; I feel as light as a feather; I can hardly refrain from jumping up and down. Let Dora make up them pretty little fixings, and Mr. Little set and look at her as if he'd eat her up, and Mr. Barker go a courting Phillista Podd seven times a week, and Timothy Bethuen wait on Philistina home from meeting; my destiny is settled, and I survey the prospects of them all with triumph. Oh! how sweet them laylocks smell! And he's fond of laylocks—he said so when I put a pitcher full of 'em on the mantletry shelf of his room. But where was I? I want to recall again every one of my sensations. And it was so totally unexpected! I hadn't the least idea in the world but that he was mad in love with that Belle Waldon; it looked suspiciously like it. I'd been up in the garret from two to three hours every afternoon for more'n a week, spying out their didoes. There she was, every blessed day, at that window, throwing out flowers and kissing her fingers, laughing and making faces, and talking by signs; and then putting on her bonnet and going out to walk, and he a-going out a few minutes afterwards. I knew he joined her before I followed 'em to see for certain; and if her brother hadn't been along, too, to give a kind of air of propriety to the thing, I should have felt bound to let Mrs. Waldon know what was going on. Dear me! I wonder what they let him hang about so for! If I had a lover as perfectly respectable as Mr. Evelyn, I wouldn't have any brother along, like watching Gorgons; and I suppose it was only because he *wasn't* her lover, but mine, after all, that they let him be with her so much. He's told me all about it now—that it wasn't Belle he knew the best, but her brother; that they were college chums, that they graduated at the same time, and that he's come here a-purpose to see him; that Henry Waldon was dreadful anxious to make a match between him and his sister, and that he might have made out if I, me, myself, Alvira Slimmens, hadn't interfused like an angel of light to prevent—they were his very

words—by myself securing his devotionate regards, his first, first love; and then he sang—

"Oh, there's nothing half so sweet in life  
As love's young dream."

I confessed to him that I thought so, too, that this was *my first* real attachment; and he squeezed my hand, and looked at me so—I can hardly endure to recall it yet, it was so thrilling. And it all came about of my hinting to him, in a laughing kind of a way, that somebody had sharp eyes, and somebody had seen certain rather curious circumstances taking place between two windows. We were sitting side by side on the sofa in my bodoor. He'd been playing on my guitar, and I jest allowed my hand to touch his, by accident, and then I attempted to snatch it away, and when he retained it, I told him very archly that he needn't *press my fingers so*, when I'd seen *another person* kissing hers to him, that very afternoon; and then he smiled, and squeezed it all the harder, and looked at me so thrillingly with those bright eyes, and sat up closer by me, and said: "Ah, Miss Slimmens, don't think my heart is *there*; it's only a pretence, to cover up my real feelings. I have never seen but *one* being who fully realized my ideal of what a woman *can* be, and she—she—sits by my side! Darling Alvira! need I say more?" And then my head sunk on his shoulder, and I whispered that he needn't. He's so modest, too! he almost blushed when I attempted to kiss him; he was full as reluctant as a girl. But he's so young. I might be his mother; but he's too innocent to suspect it. I've often heard that boys always fall in love the first time with women older than themselves, and it seems it is even so. After a while, we had some such pleasant conversation. He asked me if I knew who put a certain beautiful poem under his door, said it was unique, perfectly unique, and had been one of the first things to fix his particular regards upon the fair authoress. He could not, he knew he could not be mistaken in his intuitions as to who it was, nor that the initials at the bottom—"A. S."—stood for Alvira Slimmens. I said that I was afraid that he would be afraid of an intellectual being, a woman who wrote out the infusions of her soul; but he replied that a woman had as good a right to be "blue" as a violet or a larkspur, that the violet couldn't help its color, and that the bosom where such poetry burnt and glowed must express itself, or burst! Oh, it was beautiful! I was edified by his thoughts; only I was so all a-trimble with bliss that I could think of nothing else but that I was nestling by his side,

and that my hand reposed in his. Only last evening that I was so happy! I urged him to set the wedding-day and—hark! he is entering his apartment now. How I start at the sound of his footstep! his tiny, tiny footstep, encased in those dear patent-leather gaiters. He's so exquisite in his dress, and his handkerchiefs always smell of heliotrope. Ah me! I'm too satisfied for earth! Let that bold minx look and giggle out of her window, if she's a mind to; it can't affect me now. But I'll just steal up to the attic and see if she is a performing as usual. I would go down to my bodoor if I thought he would follow me; but, as I can't see him until tea-time, I'll keep an eye on that girl.

Yes! just as usual! Pretending to sew, and stealing looks out of her eyes all the time. Her mouth keeps dimpling with the laugh in her; but I guess she'll have on another face before long. It is evident he hasn't told her yet. There! down goes her sewing on the floor, and up goes her hand over her eyes, and she's staring and staring—my, such talking across lots I never saw.

O dear, I'm so tired of expecting him every instance; I wonder what's keeping him. He went out for his walk after tea, and he hasn't come in yet, and it's nigh on to nine o'clock. Last night, at this hour, I was by his side here on this sofa, listening to his gentle voice. It is true that it was I who *first* hinted at love—I offered him my hand and fortune; but it's Leap Year, thank the fates, and I'd a perfect right. He responded instantaneously, he said I was all his fancy painted me, and more, much more. I believe I'll just steal into his room and see what I can see, for I know he's out. I should have heard his step if he'd walked on eggs, for I've been doing nothing but listening since nine o'clock. I shall hear him, when he comes in, in time to meet him on the stairs and invite him into my bodoor.

How sweet his apartment smells! it's like a rose—

"Ethereal! it is

His breathing that perfumes his chamber thus!"

as Milton says. It almost takes my breath away to step into it; it sort of frightens me, and pleases me, too. I do believe I love that boy. I'll just take a peep, and back again to meet him. His trunk's standing open; it's always been locked with a patent lock, and I've never been able to see the inside of it before. Well, if this isn't curious! Ladies' clothes! dresses, petticoats, shawls, jewelry! Can my Edgar be a

robber, be a smuggler who enters boarding-houses only to secure the wearing apparel of its inmates? No! the thought is too enervating; besides, if innocence was ever impressed upon a mortal face, it is on his. He's incapable of any deceit. Here, on the band of these—these garments, and on these handkerchiefs, are the same mysterious initials; they're all marked "H. H.," and some of 'em "Helen Hewitt," and done with it. It can't be a sister, for it isn't the same name as Evelyn, that's plain; it can't be the clothing of a dead young woman to which he has been engaged to be married, for he told me with his own lips that he'd never loved any but myself. O dear! I wish I knew. I sha'n't sleep a wink, to-night, not a wink, in my endeavors to fathom this very peculiar and anonymous circumstance. Ah-h! perhaps *this* will tell something! here's the daguerreotype of a female; it looks enough like him to be his sister—it *is* his sister; and she must be married, young as she looks, to a gentleman by the name of Hewitt. How simple, after all! and I to be suspecting *him* of being a smuggler—him—my precious Edgar! I could fairly kiss his sister's picture, I feel so relieved. She's got nice clothes, any how; they must be a very good fami—mercy! Mr. Evelyn! I beg your pardon! I *really* did not hear you come in. You see, I was passing by, and found your door open, and your trunk standing wide, and I was afraid some smuggler had entered the premises and been robbing you. I just stepped in to see if anything was missing, and to close your trunk for you. Went out in a great hurry, and wasn't aware you left it open? Perhaps you didn't. You'd better look 'round and see if any of your property is missing. I just this instance stepped in, and haven't had time to see a thing yet. Why, you've shut that trunk without hardly looking to see its contents. Never mind; your money is in the other one? You're so careless and unsuspicious; just like one of your age. Do you know, my darling, how long this evening has seemed? What kept you? I waited in my bodoor for your footstep until my heart ached. Sit down here, dearest, and whisper to your Alvira what it was that detained you.

## CHAPTER XV.

HOW SHE CAME TO TAKE A LADY BOARDER.

I DON'T know hardly why I feel so uneasy this afternoon, unless it's because Edgar was out at dinner-time. I've got so I can't endure

to have him out of my sight, and yet we've only been engaged three days. I had spring chickens stewed in cream a purpose for him, and he wasn't here after all; and I had the satisfaction of seeing that Timothy Bethuen eat at least two-thirds of a chicken, and my beloved Edgar never to have a taste. I'd tell Timothy, out and out, that I couldn't board him at the price I've been doing, less than any of the rest of my boarders, any longer, if I expected to keep boarding-house many weeks more; but as I don't, I guess I won't turn the poor fellow away till they all go. I warrant he was surprised not to find his socks darned, this washing; but I've done with darning old socks in hopes of catching a preacher. Miss Slimmens's prospects have brightened, of late. I do feel terribly uneasy, though. I believe I'll take another rencontre out of that garret-window, to pass away the time. Belle Waldon's been making up a mighty pretty white dress lately, pretty enough for a bride; but I guess nobody has asked her to have 'em, for all that. I wonder at her making it up herself, too, when they generally hire all their dressmaking done. It was about finished yesterday; she was putting the lace on the sleeves. I'll just climb up to my lookout, and see what she's about next.

Well, did I ever! a wedding, sure enough! I can see all over the room pretty much. There is Belle, dressed in white, with a wreath on her head; and there's somebody else standing before the glass, in that very dress Belle was making, and Belle is fixing a veil on her hair. *That's* the one that's going to be married, sure. I wish she'd turn her head, so I could see her face! I'll perish of curiosity in less'n two minutes, if she doesn't look round. What a flutter they're in! Why *won't* she turn her head? As sure as I'm alive, it's that very girl whose picture I saw. Yes, it's Helen Hewitt; it's his sister, and I'll bet he's over there now. Why didn't he invite *me* to the wedding, I'd like to know. Who's entitled to his confidence, if I am not? No, I'm *not* mistaken. Dear! dear! If I only could see through a grindstone, I'd know what was going on. That provoking curtain has just fell down of itself, a-purpose to vex me.

There's that Caturah, hollering after me as loud as she can; but I'm not going to hear her just yet. What's that she says? A strange gentleman in the parlor wants to see me immediately, on important business! Well, wonders never cease! What he can want is the question; I must go and see. They've put that

curtain down, any how, and it's no use to stand here peeking.

Good-afternoon, sir. Have I taken any young lady to board lately? and if so, is she in the house now? *No, sir!* this is a gentlemen's boarding-house exclusively, sir. Your daughter, sir? And you've been informed that she has been residing under this roof for several weeks? It's a mistake. There's been a very nice young gentleman here for some time—a stranger. Evelyn—Edgar C. Evelyn, sir, is his name. Describe his personal appearance? Really, I don't know as you've any right to inquire; but, as I've no objections, I think I'll answer you. *Very handsome, but small; black eyes, full of fire; wavy ringlets; small hands and feet; low voice; rosy lips; a cunning little scar on his left cheek.* No, sir, he's not in the house now; he was not at home to dinner, and has not come in yet. *Your daughter?* Mr. Evelyn your daughter? You heard she'd dressed herself up like a man? Foolish child! Oh, I see through it all now; but hurry, or you'll be too late. They're getting married now, this minute, and you'll be too late. I'll show you the house—right round the corner, on the other side of the block. I'll go with you, if you'll wait till I catch up a bonnet.

Too late, sir! There's the minister coming away, and there's the Squire's buggy flying around the corner. You can go in, if you want to, and I'll go back home, but your bird has flown; I saw her in that buggy with Harry Waldon, and they've been married this half hour, I know too well.

An account of the affair in the *Pennyville Eagle*? Let me see it, Dora, do! (*Reads.*)

#### HIGHLY ROMANTIC AFFAIR.

A highly romantic affair disturbed the usual quiet of our little village, a day or two ago, which has furnished subjects for the gossips of the most exciting character. As we happen to be in the confidence of one of the parties, and as the affair is likely to become public any way, we will give the correct version. Our friend Harry Waldon, the "best fellow that ever lived," and well known to all our citizens, fell in love, while at college, with a pretty girl, a mischievous, wild, enchanting creature, and withal an heiress. Whether her parents thought her too precious to bestow upon anybody, or whether they did not fully appreciate the excellent qualities of our friend Harry, deponent sayeth not; but they opposed the match, and Harry came home to "watch and wait" until

some change should take place. Soon after, arrived in town and stopped at a certain popular boarding-house, kept by a certain maiden lady, a young gentleman of modest and graceful demeanor and fashionable appearance; he created quite a sensation. He was delicate, almost feminine, in his appearance. His window overlooked the garden and residence of Squire Waldon. All went on smoothly. We noticed that our friend Harry wore a radiant countenance; we wondered at the change in his demeanor; we ceased to rally him upon his pensive appearance. But we didn't know— Who did? Nobody! One day, an elderly gentleman arrived in search of a fair fugitive; but he was ten minutes too late. Warning had been received. As he stepped out of Miss ——'s boarding-house, the minister stepped out of Squire Waldon's. A swift horse bore the happy couple to the expected train. What more remains to be said? We wish them a long life and plenty of happiness, only hoping that the charming lady will never again feel the inclination, or the necessity for—as it is vulgarly expressed—donning the masculine nether habiliments—in short, wearing the breeches.

May I take the paper to my room, Dora? Humph! the impudent jade! and to think that I actually kissed her! My blood boils when I think of it; and it boils harder still when I read that scrap of paper I picked up in her room, after she went away. Let me look at it again.

"Such fun, Belle, such fun alive! I thought I should have suffocated! She wanted to kiss me, but I resisted a long time, for I was afraid she took snuff; but at last she conquered me—she was the strongest. However, she *doesn't* take snuff; the kiss, whatever else it was, was not *snuffy*!"

Ha! snuffy, indeed! If ever he brings his bride back here, she'll get her dress tore some day; she didn't reflect she was making an enemy for life. Harry Waldon had better settle in some other place, if he wishes his wife to have any peace. I'll have my revenge for that scrap of paper yet.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### RAT EXTERMINATOR.

WHAT'S that you remarked, Dr. Burton? Arsenic? O my! I thought that horrid stuff was only good for killing rats or committing suicide! It'll make a woman of fifty, you say, as fair and blooming as a girl of twenty, and it's wonderful for fattening people up? If I

was in any danger of getting to be forty or fifty years old very soon, I believe I'd commence taking it, to preserve my complexion. I don't suppose I shall ever need fattening, though I look rather thin in the face; it runs in the Slimmens family to be thin in the face, and fleshy otherwise. Them Circassian women must be dreadfully vain females, to take such terrible stuff as arsenic to keep themselves white and soft. Don't you think so, Mr. Bethuen? Don't you think it perfectly unexcusable for the feminine sex to be given to such arts? Their minds ought to be set on higher things, Mr. Bethuen, on higher things; I've long felt it. But I suppose them Circassian ladies are heathens and Mahomaders, and don't know any better. Don't you ever feel as if you had a call to go and teach them better? Only to reflect upon their eating arsenic like sugar candy, and we sitting here in our comfortable homes, and never making an effort in their behalf! Oh, Mr. Bethuen, it's disparaging to our benevolence that such is the fact! But it is not so bad in them as to think that English women and our own American girls are a-going and doing the same, as much as they durst. Eating arsenic to make themselves look fair, you say, Dr. Burton? I'm glad you told me; I'm glad I'm warned against the depravity which exists in our midst. After this, when I see anybody *very* plump and white, I shall be sure they are arsenic-eaters. There's them twins, Philista and Philistina Podd, as fat and babyish— Oh, you needn't color up so, Mr. Barker; I didn't mean nothing, only I wished to warn Mr. Bethuen of what *might* be. It would be dreadful for a minister of the gospel to find out that his wife was a suicide, as it were, a self-poisoner, and all for the vain glory of the flesh. Dursn't never leave it off, after they've once become victims to its pernicious influence? Have to keep on taking more and more? O Doctor! And how much is it safe to begin with? I merely inquire to satisfy a physical curiosity. How many did you say, Mr. Little? Forty grains? You should think the ladies would have scruples against taking such drachms!—he! he! But that's borrowed wit, for I've heard it before.

Have some more of the fried trout, Doctor: they didn't cost me anything, for Mr. Little caught 'em himself, and made 'em a present to the house, so you can thank him for 'em. Have some more, Dora, do. Dear, dear, what a light and trifling generation this is getting to be! Hoops, and bustles, and crinoline enough for a balloon, and now it's arsenic for an emetic.

Hey, Mr. Little? Tartar emetic, you should call it, considering where it originated? You jest about the soberest subjects. He's a little too much of a jesticulator; don't you think so, Mr. Bethuen?

O Lord of mercy! I've went, and gone and done it! I know I have! I feel it *here*! Committed suicide! I've gone and killed myself! Oh, how it burns! my stomach's all a-fire! Oh, I wish I hadn't—I wish I hadn't tried it; but I was so awful yellow, and it would show through spite of all I could do, and so wrinkly, and now I've gone and poisoned myself. I've taken too much! it's eating me up and burning me up alive! Dora! Dora! where are you? Oh, let me in, and tell me what to do! I'm sick—I'm poisoned with arsenic! I jest took a little, not much bigger than a quinine powder; and my stomach's all griping up and burning like fire. Take an antidote? What? Eggs? O dear, I wonder if there's any in the house; I'll go and see. You go and find out where the Doctor is. If he isn't in his room, send Caturah after him—quick. Never mind the eggs; run for the Doctor. Oh-h-h! Susan, where's the eggs? Bring me some. Here! hand 'em to me—a dozen. Oh-h-h!

There! I've swallowed á dozen raw. Oh, Doctor, is that you? I'm afraid you're too late. I'm poisoned; I'm dying dead this minute. Did you bring your stomach-pump? Arsenic—it's arsenic. I'll open my mouth. Oh-h-h!

I believe I feel better. Do you think it's all up? Do you think I'm out of danger? Oh, Doctor, I've run a narrow risk this time. It all come of them pesky rats. I got some vermifuge, or exterminator, or whatever you call it, and put it on a plate in the pantry to keep the rats away; and somehow I forgot, and mistook it for sugar, and sweetened some lemonade with it I was making, the day was so warm. I never thought, till I begun to be sick, what was the matter. Oh, Doctor, if it hadn't been for them eggs and that pump, I shudder to think—Yes, I'll lay down; I feel as weak as a cat. If you will jest help me up the stairs, I'll go to bed. Dora? Yes, I'm afraid I scart her most to death. After I'm comfortable, you'd better go and see if the excitement has hurt her. O my, them pesky rats! There! that'll do. Come in again after supper, and see how I am. And, Doctor, a word more—be sure and let the boarders know it was them pesky insects that did it.

Now 't I'm out of danger, you'll never catch

me at *that* again, not if I get to be yellower than brimstun itself, and need bleaching more'n old Aunt Peggy's best bunnit. My sensations were undescribable; I hardly knew which it was best to send for—the Doctor or Mr. Bethuen. I hope Timothy Bethuen won't distrust the truth of the matter. I didn't much more than begin to feel better before I luckily thought of laying it to the rats. Nobody'll guess the truth but Dora, and she's seen me in too many predicaments for me to care for her. She's a good soul, for she never betrays me; but now that she's a husband, it will be different. I'm awful afraid she'll confide it to him, and he's so fond of fun, he'll let it all out; he's an awful person to get jokes on people. I feel as weak and used up as if I'd been sick a month. I shall have to keep my room two or three days, at least; and there's them currants getting too ripe for jelly, and the house a-going to rack and ruin, with nobody to watch them everlasting girls. But I'm thankful I'm alive, currant jelly or no currant jelly; and the next time anybody catches me taking arsenic to bleach myself, they may set me down for a bigger simpleton than I am. I'm afraid there's no such thing as making a young woman out of an old one, as easy as making a new Tuscan out of an old one. I hate to give up—I can't, that's the long and short of it. But ugh, that arsenic!

## NONIE'S CHOICE.

BY ALICE B. HAVEN.

It was curious to see Archibald Lenox buying sugar-plums like any schoolboy. It would have seemed a strange proceeding to those who knew him as the acute and patient lawyer, the learned member of the Historical Society, the author of those excellent articles on Continental Literature in the "Ultra Marine Review." The pretty French girl behind the counter at Malliard's, who snapped her wonderfully black eyes—all to no purpose—as she gave him the change, knew him only as one of her regular customers, and thought it the most natural thing in the world that he should walk in three nights out of the week and inquire for chocolate *crème* and those delicious little *vanille* puffs that were fresh for the evening parties served by monsieur, her employer, at that hour. "He is the good *oncle*," said she to herself in one of the long mirrors that reflected her braids and flounces—and she nodded thoughtfully to those black eyes shining out of the plate glass upon her—"or grand-père—who can tell? He have some leetle vons!"

She was wrong in her conclusions. Archibald Lenox passed three evenings of every week in the parlor of his step-mother, Madam Lenox; and on the sofa, the wide old haircloth sofa that filled up half of one side of the room, he usually found a little figure stretched at full length, wrapped in a shawl at this time of the year, though the large grate, with its brass ornaments, glowed again.

"You are so late, Brother Archie, I thought you would never come!"

Why should he be required to place this impatience to the score of the dainties he carried? Of course, it was only the *crèmes* she cared about, but still to think that any one watched for him, for any reason whatever, sent a quickened pulse through the whole frame of the grave, unimpressible man before her. His life had been so very lonely! Ever since he used to steal into that very room when a boy, and gaze with awe and wonder on a picture that had long since been removed from its place of honor over the mantle—the picture of his dead mother, with the far off unchanging smile upon her lips—his life had been one long solitude, broken only by one love, and that was in the past now, shut up in the dreary vault that had stolen his mother

from him. He remembered when his step-mother came, and what a stately, handsome woman she was, for all that she was not in her first youth; stately now, when almost as many more years had passed away, and the shadow of a great loss compassed her. She had always been kind and generous towards her husband's son; but the tall, shy boy needed wooing to unfold his heart to her, and she did not understand that, any more than she did the caprices of the child lying on the sofa there now.

"You have one of those wicked headaches again, Nonie." And he stooped a very little over the prostrate figure.

"Yes, all day; I am almost distracted with it. Give me your hand—there, see how hot my forehead is. Smooth it for me, there's a dear old fellow, won't you?"

Wouldn't he? She little knew how happy he was to draw the lumbering mahogany chair between her and the light, after his due salutation to Madam Lenox, and press his long, slender hand, soft as a woman's, on her aching brow, or smooth the silken bands of soft brown hair, while she lay so still, and the closed eyelids threw a shadow on her white face. How round, with what a bright wild-rose flush it was when he first saw it, three years before! How nervous and ill at ease he felt when he came to be presented to the young bride. He wanted to love her, for Gorden's sake, he hoped she would not be repulsed by his solemn uncountness; for Gorden, his step-brother, was all the world to him, and though he had made up his mind bravely to give up the best place in his affectionate heart, he did not want to be wholly cast out.

"She says you are a good old bear, Archie"—and the young man enjoyed his child-wife's sauciness, as he repeated it. "That's what she said about you last night, old fellow."

He was old—thirty-five his next birth-day—and looking quite forty, from the height of his pointed shirt collar and the ancient style of hair-dressing which he still patronized. He felt like Gorden's father, and indeed he had been such the last ten years, father and brother both; the boy was the light of his eyes, as he had been the delight of his shy, silent youth. "Gorden's wife!" Little she knew how richly endowed

with love and tender watch-care she was when she became such; for when he brought her from her fair Southern home and young brothers and sisters to this stately but dreary house, she felt that, but for the sunshine of her husband's love, she should have frozen into a statue as still and as chill as those that looked out from their niches in the library.

"And they will have children, dear, curly-haired little ones, as Gorden was when I first came home from college, and I shall be god-father and uncle, and have some object to work for—to settle some of them in the world, and so grow old with warm young hearts around me, and leave them all I have," mused Archibald Lenox.

But this was not to be. Scarcely had the courtly congratulations of old friends ceased, and the sharp pang of a mother's jealousy, at finding herself no longer first, died out, when death came, and left the bride a widow's garments for her wedding garland, and the mother childless.

"Keep Nonie with you, mother; she is a part of me. Nonie, you will not leave my poor mother." And the stiffening hands closed upon theirs in solemn compact. With the young wife the slightest wish was as a law, and though there was little outward warmth with the mother when this sudden end of all her hopes benumbed and paralyzed every faculty, she would have kept with miserly tenacity everything that had belonged to him—his watch, his books, the very gloves he had worn, and of course the wife that had been called by his name. She seemed to rally first from the shock, though there was hereafter nothing for life to give, while Nonie, for whom this early hope might have "set into sunrise," lay prostrate, inconsolable, weeping out her youth and strength in the closed chamber where he had died, or stealing like a shadow from room to room, whence every ray of sunlight was excluded. No wonder that she "dwined" into the fitful, capricious, aimless child that Madam Lenox wondered at, yet softened towards, for were not those wild bursts of wailing for her dead son? And if she was strangely inconsistent at times, in longing for sunshine and liberty, or foolishly set on dainties that were not good for her, Gorden had told her from the first that she was only a self-willed child, and they must have patience till she came to womanhood.

"Such an ogress!" complained Nonie, to her fast friend and confidant, the grave brother Archie she had been so afraid of at first. "Our housekeeper, Butler, you know—she will not

have a solitary bit of dessert, except fruit sometimes, which is all very well in its way, but when one is longing for a currant pudding, or a *mille fruits*! She says I must eat solids, if ever I wish to be strong again; but oh, brother Archie, if she knew how I long for a macaroni even, sometimes, it would melt the heart of a stone! If you could only see one of old Mamma's pound-cakes, or fruit-cakes, either!"

"And where do they get such things, Nonie? At the baker's?"

"No, you dear old soul, at the confectioner's. Once"—he knew very well when it was, by the pause—"when I first came here, you know, we used to go almost every evening, after the opera or a concert, to that nice Malliard's; but mamma never eats confections—she was never young, you know—and, though I look and look at every such place when we are driving out, she never seems to see."

"If that is all, you shall be made happy, Nonie. I will bring you some of those things myself."

"But that is not all. Butler interferes with everything, and at home I always had all my own way, you know. There! that is a specimen"—as the door slowly opened, and an ancient face, with silver-rimmed spectacles, appeared and withdrew; "she has come to let you understand that it is time you went away. She does not like me to sit up a minute after mamma has gone to bed. I sit up, and sit up very late, I know. I cannot bear to go through those great gloomy passages, and my room is just like a haunted chamber. Those high posts to the bed, and the curtains, and those great, heavy wardrobes—I always imagine there is a man inside, and yet I don't dare to look, for fear there should be one, and so I creep into bed, and lie staring at the wall, if it is moonlight, and listen to the creak, creak of some door, or the rattle of the stair window, till I am ready to scream with fright. I think the shadows are blacker in this house than anywhere else!"

Kind old bear that he was, he could not conquer her terror, but he did what he could; hence the *bon-bons*.

The room was very dusky, for all the glow of the fire-light—no gas; Madam Lenox inveighed against it, as ruinous to the eyes—and the tall astral lamp, with an antique female in bronze supporting it, failed to do more than light the centre of the wide space in which it stood. The high ceiling and heavy cornices, the closed mahogany folding-doors, with heavily carved pillars, which shut off the library, were



in shadow. Archibald looked around him, after Madam Lenox had retired, the evening of the cruel headache, and remembered what a dull, ghostly room it always was to him in early life.

Nonie, the child, was sitting up by this time, and the warm, soft shawl was thrown back. A slight, undeveloped figure, in a close black dress, with that pale face, and eyes a little sunken, though large and blue as the sky. They followed him about the room. "Just look at that old cabinet, and that great screen in the corner, and the two chandeliers in bags. Did they ever have candles in them? Did you ever see them lighted? And that black rim inside all the picture-frames! I sit and shiver here nights, and, when I make myself go to bed finally, I fly through the hall as if some awful shape followed me; and when I get to my own room and lock the door, my heart beats so fast, and I think that I am stifling! Do you know, I almost asked Bridget to sleep in my room! If I only had a dog I could speak to, when I lie there alone in the night!"

"Poor little dove!" He put out his arms involuntarily, and she fluttered up from the sofa, and perched upon his knee.

"It's no wonder I have headaches, is it, brother Archie? I often feel, in the morning, as if I had not closed my eyes, and, when I do, I have such horrid dreams! I see, I see *him*, you know, so very, very ill, or lying here dead—not dead, only going to be buried alive, and I cannot make people understand or believe it—one no one but you. You always seem to."

"Do I, Nonie?"

"Yes, but they won't listen to you, either; but go on, and carry him away. Oh, it is horrible! I should die if it wasn't for you, Archie!" And she nestled back against his broad shoulder, and cried in such a still, patient way that the drops seemed to flow in and chill his heart.

It cost a great struggle, but presently he said: "It is too much for you, Nonie. We shall have to give you up, and let you go back to your own home again."

"O no, no! I promised Gorden!"

"I know, but he wished only your happiness. He did not mean to sacrifice you to us."

"But mamma—she would miss me, I know, for all she is so quiet. She would have no one but Butler to speak to, and now we talk about *him*, sometimes, and all he did and said when he was a boy, and how you loved him, and how good you always were to him."

"Does Mrs. Lenox say that?" He did not

know that she had ever seen, much more, acknowledged his devotion to her idol.

"O yes, and how good you were when his father died, and how you helped him on in business! Why, what else makes me love you so, Archie?"

"Do you love me?"

"Dearly! There!" And she kissed his cheek, of her own free will, the first kiss she had given any one since that last unheeded pressure on her dead husband's brow. "Gorden told me I must love you, before I came here, and, before he left me, he told me often to go to you with everything that troubled me, and that you would always take care of me."

"I will, I will, Nonie! Whom else have I to take care of?"

"It makes me so quiet to sit here. I am not afraid of anything now; I wish I could always feel so brave; but this house always had such a still, gloomy look. It was summer, you know, when I came home, but I shivered when I came into it. Do you believe in presentiments? I think it was because Gorden was going to go so soon; but when you are here, it seems different. The minute I hear you open the front door and come through the hall, I stop looking around so, over my shoulder." She gave a backward glance, and her eyes dilated, as a child looking into darkness. "Why can't you always stay?"

Struggle as he would against it, as he had many a time before, the wish that he could stay, that he had the right to shield her always, rushed into his mind, and he could not drive it forth, for all it seemed like treason to his dead brother, and selfish treachery to the trustful, unworldly child whose head rested against the strongly beating heart that cried out for her. Even if she would listen to him, he had no right to use his guardianship to lure her to the dull, dreary fate that life with him would be. She was so young, she would forget the past, and marry some one nearer her own age, and bloom out once more into the freshness of her early life. Poor child, what a sorrowful blight it had been! How could he bring her "out of the shadow into the sun?"

"Nonie is far from well," he ventured to say to Madam Lenox, the first time that he saw her quite alone; "she needs some change, I think." And he looked away from her face, while he handed her the deed he had brought for a signature.

"You are mistaken, Archibald." How often had that quick, decided utterance driven back some plea for his own larger liberty! "She has

an occasional headache; no wonder, with all the trash she eats. I must say, you are not judicious; I thought better of your judgment. Some miserable French confection enters whenever you come into the house."

"The barest trifles. You forget that she is only a child, madam; she must have some indulgences."

"She is almost nineteen. It is time she ceased to be considered a child."

"And what is before her?"

"I do not understand you."

"What can be offered her for the unthinking aimlessness of her present life? Will you have teachers for her?"

"She does not care to study. She reads all day; she has taken down every book in the library."

"She must have society, sooner or later."

"Why necessarily?"

The tone was so cold and indifferent—though, poor lady, she was far from feeling so—that it stung the usually guarded man to a retort.

"Why? Because she is not to be sacrificed to a memory, holy and dear as it is to us! This is no cloister. She will forget the past. Remember how short their acquaintance was. Is one year to cloud a lifetime?"

"Hush! Not yet, Archibald!" And she waved him back, as if his very presence distressed her. Neither her dread nor the coldness it counterfeited had saved her from the shock. She had been fearing this for days, knowing that he was right, too, and for this reason trying to shut her eyes to the truth.

He would not press her further then; he was sorry he had said so much, so sat down in the old leathern arm-chair that had been his father's, as she went out of the room, and took a volume from the book-case beside him. He could not read, though; books had lost their old spell of late; time had been when they could enchain him in forgetfulness of all things, but now he listened unconsciously for the light step that he hoped would enter, and seemed to feel a fluttering touch upon his shoulder. The pencil in his hand moved idly along the margin of the page, while an old rhyme came and went to a measured music.

Why had fate marked him for such a solitary, joyless life? Why had Gordon received that good gift, the power of winning love everywhere, from his very nurses in the cradle, from the rigid old housekeeper, so severe to him, from this young heart, that clung to him scarce knowing why, and taking the tribute royally, as his due, so little appreciating it,

making so little return? What if any one had ever loved him, if his father had, to begin with, so that he had not felt repelled, and as if unwelcome in the house, until he withdrew to the set of chambers where he had busied himself with his books! If he had remained in this house instead, and it had been his happy fortune to bring a wife here for his father's blessing before he died, and then it would not have been so bitter to lose him, for perhaps his wife would have won for him the affection he never could call out. He would never have left the old house, nor would it have been dull and solitary. He would have studied—O yes, but not so exhaustingly. When languor began to steal over him, there would have been a dear presence hovering around to win him awhile from his books, and then children, perhaps, dear little rosy faces to press to his rough cheek, and shrieks of baby laughter, as his strong arms tossed the venturesome, but half frightened child as far as he could reach, and a boy with open brow and large blue eyes—he did not stop to trace the likeness—leaned upon his knee, and asked thoughtful, stirring questions of the heroes he had worshipped in childhood!

Ah me! He drew a long breath, and the vision faded—faded into the dim, solitary library, with its russet-bound volumes, where he sat all alone, quite alone in life. He took up his hat, and went out. Nonie was on the stairs, but he did not care to see her just then, and she entered the library with a childish pout of disappointment.

"He might have waited one minute, I should think." It was so very unusual for him to come there in the daytime; everything was in formal routine about the house, even his visits, and it was a pleasant surprise to hear from Bridget that he was in the house. "He's been sitting here reading, I declare, and I dying to have some one to speak to! It's too provoking!" And she took up the volume he had just laid aside. "Making notes, as usual"—for the book opened, in the most obliging way, at the very page he had been scribbling upon. But it was no dry annotation on the "Philosophy of the Conditioned." She saw that it was a rhyme, and she puzzled out the crabbed lawyer's hand.

"Time, you thief, who like to get  
Sweet's into your list, put that in.  
Say I'm weary, say I'm and,  
Say that health and wealth have missed me,  
Say I'm getting old, but add—  
Nonie kissed me!"

"So he liked it, dear old bear!" she thought, with a little thrill that was quite new to her.

It was a dreadfully wicked thing to do, but the little lady was famous for rash and sacrilegious exploits, in Mrs. Butler's eyes at least—she deliberately tore out the leaf, although it was a fine library edition she was rifling, and the abstracted pages contained the sum of a valuable argument, folded it nicely, and bestowed it where all young girls carry their treasures. The only tyranny that could master her was stealing over her again, and presently Nonie crept back to her room with both hands pressing her throbbing head, and lay there all the long afternoon in physical torment, with the light shut out. But a pleasant thought came now and then, for all the pain, and when the lamps were lighted, she took up her old place on the sofa, although Mrs. Lenox did not come into the parlor with her, but had the fire replenished in the library to look over some papers discolored by time and filed with the exactness of legal documents.

Nonie lay listening for the footsteps on the stairs, and a satisfied feeling that she should have Archie all to herself when he did come; but sleep stole over her unawares, and when he came it was to find her quite unconscious of his presence. He sat down quietly in his old place, at the head of the sofa, and ventured to lay his hand lightly upon her head. She felt the touch even in her dreams; her eyes half opened, and she murmured something dreamily as she reached upwards for his hand, and, clasping it in both her own, with a smile of welcome that had a new depth and fondness in it, slept again, pressing his hand closely. Once she turned, nestling down closer to the pillows, and he bent down his head to listen. He expected to hear her husband's name, but she murmured, "Dear old Archie!" and, low and broken as the utterance was, it set his whole soul in tumult, that and the close clasping of his hand against her innocent heart. He had not meant she should ever know what power her very presence had over him; but, sitting there so still, with only the shaded lamp and the glow of the fire-light, looking downward spell-bound upon the dear face, and feeling every throb of that lonely little heart, how could he check the rising tide of feeling that rose and beat against the barriers he had set for it? It was a long, refreshing sleep, and she woke with the same new smile upon her face, looking up in his eyes as she said:—

"I slept so sweetly; it has rested me so. I

was not afraid of anything; I felt all the time that you were here."

"Oh, my child," he said, passionately, "why may I not watch you so always? Why must I ever leave you to suffer alone? I lie awake thinking of your terror at night, and I long to gather you so, so—close to my heart, and drive away any shade, any phantom of terror."

"Archie! you frighten me now." And she shrank a little, it was so unlike anything she had ever seen in him before.

"Do I, darling? Forgive me! I never meant to tell you of it, but, sitting here to-night watching you, I have forgotten myself. Nonie, I cannot help loving you. I believe I must have loved you from the moment you came to us; but purely, Nonie, purely, God knows. It never would have come to this, but you are the only friend I have; the only woman's hand I have ever touched is this. Let me love you; I do not ask you to love me."

"But what if I do, Archie?" and she released the hand he had released. "What if I want you to stay with me always?" And she looked up into his eyes with a sweet, untroubled glance, but meeting his they changed, and faltered, and fell again. "Do you think he would care if he knew I loved you? he always asked me to. I think it would have made him happy, if he knew you cared for me so much. Mamma could tell us; shall we ask her?"

He passed his arm around her, as she sprung up from the sofa, and held her closely to him one moment with all the love of a lifetime in that mute caress. "Oh, if you are deceiving yourself, child! if I am suffering you to do it! God forgive me. It is a terrible temptation!"

No wonder that Madam Lenox, usually so calm and unmoved, looked up with a start as they appeared before her. The papers scattered over the desk were her son's letters, and letters addressed to him in his college life; they had unnerved her.

"We want to ask you something, mamma," Nonie said, simply. "Archie wants to stay with us, always; he loves me, I know; he loves me a great deal more than I deserve, or than any one else ever will. Don't you think that it would have made the one we all care most for very happy if he had known it would have been so, and that we should stay together always, and Archie would overlook my foolishness, and try to make me good and wise as he is?" She looked up to him very proudly,

with an almost wisely confidence, more assuring than many words, when he felt so humble and so unworthy, too!

"Yes, it is better so! If you can love him enough to be happy, Nonie." And though her lips trembled, and her brow was knit with an inward pang of jealousy for the dead, better so than to see her given to a stranger.

"You forgive me, mother! I never meant this; I did not plan this selfishness; I did not dream of it, even to-day, when I talked with you."

"I believe you, Archie." She had never called him so before, or spoken in such a softened tone in all those long years. "I can understand impulse, even in you—and myself, too," she added, smiling faintly. "All these have been pleading your cause"—and she pointed to the letters. "I have never known before how much I have owed you for saving my boy."

He understood; he remembered the threatened disgrace, that neither would bring themselves to speak of, now he was gone, and in Nonie's presence, too.

"Then I may love Archie, mamma; you will say yes for *him*?" And Nonie put her hand quietly into his; he did not dare to claim it, now that the first excitement had passed away; he could only wonder at his boldness, and dread self-deception on her part.

"Oh, Nonie, I dare not take you!" He sank down into the chair that Madam Lenox had left (for, though she could speak generously, she could not see them together just yet), and, drawing away from her, covered his face with his hands. "You do not know your own heart; it is only because you are unselfish, and wish to make me happy."

"No, Archie, you don't understand; I want you to make me happy." And she drew his hands away, and perched herself upon his knee wilfully. "I want you to make them give me my own way, and to keep me from being afraid of my shadow, and to put your great arms around me always, and love me as you did just now, and I shall love you this way;" and she showered little fluttering kisses about his face. Then a more quiet, womanly mood stole over her: "I want you to teach me and help me to be all that I know I ought to be. I shall mind you, always, for I know that there is nobody so wise, or so good, or so noble in the whole wide world, and I do love you with all my heart; and I shall be so proud, so very proud and happy to be—*your wife*."

A part of his dream came true; for the rose-

flush came back to Nonie's cheeks with the new energy and purpose of her life; and, shall we acknowledge it? with the abstinence from Malliard's dainties, which she forgot to hunger after, now that Mrs. Butler's rule was abolished, and she went about like a steady little house-keeper, looking after all manner of unromantic affairs. The sunshine seemed to steal after her into every nook and corner of the old house, as one blind after another was unfolded, and the frosty rime of years and conventionalities melted from the heart of Madam Lenox, until she followed her tight footsteps with a blessing.

So all three came softly and thankfully "out of the shadow," and lived a new and more blessed life in the sun of a cheerful household love.

## SPRING WINDS.

BY ALICE B. HAVEN.

(Continued from page 151.)

### CHAPTER II.

Young trees root the faster for shaking.—BOGATZKY.

May 21st.

It is three weeks since we came to this queer old house; since *I began housekeeping*. I pretended to it all last winter, but I did not have the least management or control. Here I have to see to everything, and do a great deal myself; many things that I never tried before. It has been hard work; it is now, and particularly to-night, I feel so utterly discouraged. Laura, dear child, says it is because I am so tired out; that I shall feel brighter in the morning. She is the greatest help to me; just like a little old woman.

Well, we said good-by to Madison Avenue the 1st of May, the Bloodgoods taking the house and most of the furniture. It made Arthur very "hateful" from the moment he knew it was going to them; but I did not care, so long as it helped papa. That was all he had left, the house and furniture, after everything was settled up, and Mr. Bloodgood offered him \$21,000 as it stood. Papa says it cost him \$25,000, and that he has done very well with it; so we have just that to live on—twelve hundred dollars a year, I believe—and Arthur will have enough to help clothe himself, with the salary he is to get. Laura has her allowance, and is quite independent, with what Aunt Laura left her for her name. Papa says that many people would consider us quite rich; but, dear me! when I think that mamma used to spend half as much on her dress, it doesn't seem as if we could get along at all. I am to have an allowance for housekeeping; little enough it is, not as much as the butcher's bill used to be in Madison Avenue; but then there were two men and five women in the kitchen, and that makes a great difference. We have only Ellen here—she was our waiter in town, and I always liked her best of the whole of them. She says she learned about kitchen work helping the cook, and as soon as she heard we were going to the country she begged to come. She knows all about the country, and doesn't mind its being lonesome at all. Mrs. Gardnier said I never would get a girl to stay.

We have a vegetable garden, all gone to weeds, and a tumble-down stable, a front yard, with old-fashioned roses and lilac bushes, and great bunches of phlox and ragged robins growing here, there, and everywhere; it looked dismal enough all the while it rained so, ten whole days without the sun, and I never worked so hard in all my life, getting to rights.

We had furniture enough, that we had taken from—the Madison Avenue house—I was going to say from home. It looked scanty when it was all arranged, but papa said it must do for the present. Laura knows how to contrive chintz furniture, and is working away at a lounge and some boxes for the bedrooms—she calls them divans! She proposed that we should put some curtains up to the windows, to take off the dreadfully bare look; I have found a great bundle of the shabby ones Mrs. Bloodgood did not want, and we are going to look them over to-morrow.

O dear, how tired I am! I ache from head to foot; but I am just so tired every night, and I know I never should write any more in my journal if I did not make a beginning. It's the worry that tires me most; I am so afraid I am not going to make my market money last, and it is so dreadful to see Arthur so sullen and miserable. I can't talk to him; he hates business so, and hates the country, and he has to be so regular, too, to come out and go in, just such an hour. It is new to him, and chafes him, with not a soul that he knows out here, or would care about, if he did know them. The children are running perfectly wild. Lily has torn her nicest dresses to bits, and Morton is as dirty as a little pig from morning till night. They tire me; but I am rid of Marie, at all events. She was the trial of my life, and they really begin to mind me better since we have been here.

Papa is my great comfort; he never finds fault with anything, not even when Ellen smoked the beefsteak at dinner, and it was all the meat we had, or when Morton pulled over the inkstand on his desk. I almost hope he does not cough as much as he did; I don't believe he would if it ever should come out real dry and warm.

May 27th.

We finished putting up the curtains last night, and it has given the house quite a different look. We found three white muslin ones, and papa allowed me to match them, as near as I could, when I went in town with him on Friday. They used to be at the nursery windows, but we think them quite grand now in the parlors; then there was the blue and white dimity set, from the third story back room, and some old chintz ones that belonged in the nursery in winter. Some of them were stained, and one muslin one torn right across; they came out wrapped around the pictures—mamma's, and Lily's when she was a baby; but these windows were so much lower that we cut out the spots, and Laura pieced them very neatly. I should not have had the patience; and I don't believe I could have managed any how.

I find the sewing of the family is going to be the hardest thing of all. I never thought of that, till I found Lily had scarcely a decent dress left, and Sarah said those muslins and lawns were not fit for the country any how. I took prizes two years at Madame Arnaud's for fancy work, but I don't believe I could make Lily an apron even. Laura is so handy with her needle, and, what is more, with her scissors; she can cut and arrange work just like a seamstress; but grandmamma always taught her to cut and make her own clothes, she says. It seems to be that I know everything that is no manner of use, and nothing that helps me now. As for my piano, though I know papa could hardly afford to keep it, I have opened it only twice since I have been here.

Well, to go back to the curtains; Laura's upholstery was really quite wonderful; a little puckered and awry, some of it, but we managed to put the stretched sides next to the wall, and the lounge and boxes are great additions to the dining-rooms and the bedrooms. When we got the curtains up, papa came in and hung them for us; even he saw the difference, and praised it. I believe I never was more delighted, particularly as dinner was just ready, and Ellen had made a famous veal pie, with splendid gravy, papa said, and *my pudding* (tapioca flavored with bitter almonds) turned out beautiful. We had asparagus from the village, and a dessert of stewed pie plant. I don't think I ever enjoyed a dinner more; papa said *he* never did, and he ate more than I have seen him do for a long, long time.

Dr. Clarke has helped me to conquer my dislike to seeing after the cooking. He came

out here, a week ago, and stayed to tea; after tea, he came and sat down on the step of the porch by me, and told me how anxious he was about papa. He said that most physicians would say he had the consumption. It made me turn cold when he said so, everything starts me so now since mamma's death, and I have had this same dread about papa since last winter. Dr. Clarke says he hopes everything from a quiet mind, and the country air, and *good plain food*. He talked a great deal about that, and said it would be giving papa poison to set him down to a badly cooked dinner. So I began the very next day, and I make the dessert myself, and see that Ellen does not hurry things; that is her great fault; no wonder, where there is so much to do.

June 1st.

Sunday evening! It has been such a nice day, and I have been to church for the first time since we came out here. Papa never cared about church in town, he was always so tired Sunday mornings, and breakfast was late, and mamma took so long to dress. She did dress more elegantly than any lady in Calvary Church, I think. Papa used to laugh at her "Sunday finery," and tell her the very name of her church, "Calvary," ought to put all such things out of her mind; and he thought it was the wrong name for a fashionable church, any way.

When I asked him to go this morning, he looked quite surprised, and did not answer me; but when we were wiping the cups, he came in from the porch, and said: "Yes; Laura and I ought to go, and, as we were strangers, we could not go alone."

I must go back to the day after we first came here. I was feeling very disconsolate indeed, with everything to unpack, and the house looked so small and dark. I was standing by the window, looking out, much as Lily does when she gets those terribly sullen fits, when I saw the people driving by to the depot—we are very near it; that was one reason papa took the house, because he could walk to it; for we cannot even keep one poor old horse. We came over the night before in a wretched old hack, and just as I was thinking about it, a pair of coal black horses, with arching necks and flowing manes, came dashing along with a light open wagon, almost as handsome as a carriage, and such a nice-looking party in it, a gentleman and his sons, I should say; one about Arthur's age, and one older, and two school-boys, with a strap full of books—three seats

with the driver. A bitter, wrong feeling came over me; they seemed so happy and rich, dashing along, when poor papa and Arthur had trudged off on foot. I have noticed them very often; sometimes they drive in a *coupée*, much like ours in town, and ladies with them, always a large party, and so merry! I wondered so much who they were, till papa told me the gentleman's name, and when I tried to find out more about them from Arthur, he called them "snobs," and some other disagreeable name, and said they lived in that great brown house we can just see over the tops of the trees when we come from the depot.

Well, to-day the sexton was very civil to papa, and showed us into a nice pew, with carpets and cushions. When I looked around, who should be in the next pew but all the Waldron family. It was a great, square pew, as roomy as their carriage, and every seat full; it was just like a picture. Mrs. Waldron, I suppose it was, sat in one corner, and Mr. Waldron by the head of the pew, and a young lady, I should think about my own age, next to him; the two young men sat opposite, and all sorts and sizes of children between; they all seemed so amiable and pleasant. The young man, Arthur's age, found the places for his mother, and the other one handed papa a prayer-book; there was none in our pew, but Laura and I had ours. He is the plainest of the 'two, but he looked as if he was very honest and good. I hardly know how to describe it; I suppose I was looking at him very hard; I know I was, for I was thinking how unlike Arthur's behavior his was, and his eyes met mine; he did not stare rudely, but it was a friendly look. His eyes are just like his mother's. I saw her face, coming out of church; it is very sweet and kind, and so is his sister's. I am sure we should be friends, if only we were rich people, I mean; but of course we never shall know them, living in this plain—I was going to say mean way; it must seem mean to them, with their horses, and carriages, and servants.

But I never shall have another intimate friend. Virginia, and Cora, and Adelaide have behaved so unkindly! It was just like Cora, and Adelaide always follows her; but I did think so much of Virginia, and we had been so very intimate, and she had stayed at our house so often. I did not write it down, for it hurt me too much, last week. It was at Stewart's, when I was choosing those curtains, I saw her in the mirror; she was with Miss Jones, Miss Jones that is so fashionable, and she tried not

to see me; I know she did, for there was the mirror right before me. I could not have believed anything but my own eyes; and when I turned around as quick as lightning, for I was so angry, she blushed as guiltily as could be, and Miss Jones gave me such a distant bow, and moved along. I felt too angry at the time to know how much it hurt me; but I came home, and tore up all Virginia's letters, those last miserable little cold notes after papa failed, and all. I might have known from them that all she cared about was our house, and the way we lived. "Dear me, Augusta! is that you? Why, how are you, child? I must hurry after Miss Jones. *Au revoir!*" I can see her now, and Adelaide and Cora whispering together over the organdies. I would not see them, after that. I know very well they were talking about me. No, I can never trust any one else, or have an intimate friend!

June 4th.

Something so pleasant and surprising has happened. Just as we were sitting down to tea to-night, the black horses came dashing up, and stopped at our gate! I thought how mean the table looked, with only bread and butter, and no silver, and flew up and shut the dining-room door. For once Ellen heard the old knocker, and happened to have on her clean dress and apron before tea; she is generally too hard at work to dress. She showed the visitors into the parlor, and presently came back with their cards, Mr. and Miss Waldron, Mr. Charles Waldron, for all the family. Arthur growled out, "I'm not going in, for one;" but papa was quite decided, and said the young gentleman's call was meant for him, and he was to go to the parlor.

Mr. Waldron introduced his daughter, and papa me, while Arthur, who can be a gentleman when he likes, came forward in his best manner; I was quite proud of him. Mr. Waldron began talking to papa about Dr. Clarke, who is an old friend of his, and, after a while, they went out together to look at the weedy old garden, and Arthur talked "horse" to Mr. Charles Waldron, who is much handsomer than his brother, though I do not fancy him so much.

Miss Waldron is not pretty, but she is very nice, with such a gentle, homelike way, and she was dressed quite plainly, in a gray dress, with linen collar and sleeves, and a silk mantle, not at all a "reception toilet," which poor mamma always made so much of for first calls. She noticed the books and the engravings in a very pleasant way, and she likes some of

my favorites, which Virginia never did—"Amy Herbert," and "Cleve Hall," and "The Heir of Redcliff," for books, and the "Christus Consolator." Since mamma died, that has been my favorite engraving, and papa allowed me to have it in my own room; now it hangs between the windows in the parlor, opposite mamma's picture.

Miss Waldron has asked us all to tea on Friday evening—to-morrow evening. It is very informal, only a family party, or papa would not go. I shall be only too glad to see something else besides this house; I am tired enough of it, and Miss Waldron is so plain in her ways that I almost felt I could ask her to tea in our little sitting-room in return. Arthur is going; I am very glad of that. Mr. Charles is going to row him out upon the bay, and that is the inducement. As for dress, mourning is always the same, and I am always ready. Poormamma!

June 6th.

How kind they all were!

After papa had promised to go, and I was quite elated, it suddenly came across me that they lived so far off, and how dusty and dragged we should look if we walked. But Mr. Waldron sent the light wagon for us in the kindest way, quite early, for it is not dark now until almost eight, and their tea hour is seven. It seemed perfectly delightful to be dashing along in a carriage again; I don't think I ever enjoyed a ride more. The foliage is so exquisite, not dusty, as it is in Madison Avenue by this time, and the fences bright with blackberry vines, and elder flowers and wild roses. Laura knows every wild flower, and bush, and vine, I believe. She was to come, too, Miss Waldron particularly said; though I told her Laura was only fifteen, and of course not "out."

There is a beautiful avenue of elms and maples leading to the house from the main road, and the house is not high or grand as it looks from the road, only built on high ground. It is very odd, with wings and additions "just as the family grew," Mr. Waldron says. There is a great hall through the centre of the house, with book-cases and pictures—no regular library, but a very cosy reading-room—on the dining-room side.

We did not go into the large parlors before tea, for Miss Waldron met us at the door, and took Laura and I up stairs to the sweetest little room, furnished with cottage furniture, white and gilt—her own room has a blue set—and we sat there quite a while, till Mrs. Waldron came out of an opposite door, looking so fresh

and sweet in a clean lawn dress and white cap, and came to be introduced to us. She kissed us both. I can't tell how it touched me; not the kiss Mrs. Gardnier always gives, or Madame Arnaud's, such a cold, matter-of-course touch of the lips, but she put her arm quite close around my neck, and said: "I am glad to see you here, my dear child."

I like Angélé Waldron, and her father, and all of them; but I like Mrs. Waldron best. I had a long, lovely talk with her after tea. The young gentlemen went out rowing with Arthur, for it was almost as bright as day, after the moon rose. Miss Waldron brought her crocheting to learn a new stitch of Laura, who understands all those things, and they went into the sitting-room, where there was a stronger light; the only one in the parlor, the drawing-room I mean now, was inclosed in a shade of lovely transparencies, as soft as the moonlight. Such a sweet, sweet summer evening it was! so still that the breath of the roses and honeysuckles made the air almost too heavy with perfume. There were cut flowers in the room, for they have a green-house; but Mrs. Waldron astonished me by saying that her sons and Angélé took care of those beautiful borders themselves; and she thought that Laura and I could make a great deal out of the front garden if we chose. She knows the house very well. The clergyman used to live there before the parsonage was built; and he was very fond of flowers, and planted the roses and many other things I do not know the names of, that are almost eaten up with weeds. That was after papa and Mr. Waldron went into the dining-room, so that we were quite alone.

I told her that, even if we knew how, we never should find time; and then, I'm sure I don't know how it came about, I poured out all my troubles to her, even to the sewing, and how I struck Lily, only that morning when she and Morton were quarreling in such a hateful way, and answered me back. I am sure I did not mean to, and if any one had told me that I *could* have talked so to a person who was almost an entire stranger, I would not have believed it. But she seemed to understand it all, every bother and worry that I have, and she helped me so much! She did not seem shocked when I told her how I had slapped Lily; but said, what I know is true, that I never could expect them to mind me when I allowed them to see me angry, and that it would be a good help to self-discipline. She says every mother who tries faithfully to do her duty learns self-control that way; and that these



worries—all the worries in life that we have not brought on ourselves by wrong-doing—are just so many helps sent by God to make us gentle, and patient, and strong. I seemed to see it all in quite a new light. I told her *how much I wanted* to do right, how hard I tried, and it seemed the more I tried the worse I grew; and about reading those books of mamma's, and how hard it was to fix my mind on them, or understand them.

She smiled so pleasantly, and said: "Milk for babes, but you have begun on strong meat." Then she asked me if I had ever tried reading the Bible for myself. I felt quite proud to be able to say I had read it all through in one year—three chapters a day, and five on Sunday; as mamma said she did when she was young; but I had to confess that I did not understand the Bible either; it was all so misty and confused. She explained that so nicely—she asked me if I supposed even Herschel or Lord Ross understood all the sky at a glance, and had known the stars by name, and had been able to arrange them in their constellations. "It is all misty and confused, the sky is now to you, my dear." I told her that I knew nothing of astronomy; but to them the whole host of heaven is marshalled into order and beauty; and so it was with the Bible, a perfect plan, all order and harmony, only waiting diligent study to comprehend it, and make it a daily joy to us, "If we have the Shepherd's Glass of Faith," she said; and I knew what she meant, for I remembered the picture in mamma's elegant copy of "Pilgrim's Progress."

When I told her so, she advised me to read the whole book, as one of the best helps I could have, and she gave me another, "The Words of Jesus," and asked me if I would not try and read them for myself in the New Testament, little by little, asking God always to help me understand what I read. She did not seem to think much of reading the whole Bible in a year. And when we were through our talk—not through, for I could have stayed by her all the evening; but we heard the rest coming in—she kissed me again, on my forehead, as I sat by her on a low ottoman, and said, "God bless you, and help you." It was almost like mamma; only mamma never talked of *such* things in that plain, simple way; but it was affectionate like her, and I was glad the light was so dim when Laura and the gentlemen came in. I feel so encouraged, and so much happier, I believe I shall never get into that miserable, fretful way again.

All wrong again! Oh, it is so hard to find myself break down when I am trying my best!

I was up *very* early to-day, by half past six; Laura and I had agreed we would be, and begin to work in the garden. It was very hard work to get up, and I felt as if I had made a monstrous step in self-denial. Just as we were ready to go down, the children woke, and insisted on being dressed. I dress Lily, and Laura Morton; and they set up such a scream when I told them to wait, and go back to bed again until it was time! I hate the business, at best; it is a regular drag to have to wash that child's face and hands six times a day, and I can't make her hair curl as Marie did, try all I can. She is always a perfect fright. I do not believe I love children as some people do, who say it is only a pleasure to take care of them.

I went out feeling very cross, and began cutting and pulling up the weeds, hacking away with a kitchen knife. The dirt flew up into my eyes, and over my clean white stockings and petticoat, and the earth worms crawled out and made me sick; but it was very fascinating, after a little while, and the tougher the roots were, the more determined I was to have them. I knew it was getting late, but I had made up my mind to go from the snow-ball to the white rose bush, and I worked away till the breakfast bell rung. Then I was such a figure! my shoes wet through—they were my dressing slippers—the front of my petticoat soiled, my hands muddy, and my hair all over my eyes. I hurried into the house, for there was Lily in her night-gown yet, calling out of the chamber window, and found the dining-room just as I left it last night (it was my place to put it in order), the dust an inch thick on the mantle. I flew out at Ellen for ringing the bell without calling me first, and then at Arthur, who asked me if I was going into the market garden line, and, I am sorry to write it, boxed Lily's ears, because she would not hold still and be dressed, so that she ran screaming and complaining to papa, who spoke to me quite sharply, and said he had noticed I was very unkind and overbearing to the children. It seemed too hard; with all I do for them, working from morning till night, going to bed so tired that I don't know how to get up, sometimes. I felt the most frightfully angry feeling towards him, it really did frighten me, for I never felt so before; but I said I wished I was dead, and out of everybody's way! and got up and went to

my own room without pouring papa's coffee, and stayed there until he was gone to town, without wishing him good-by. But I have suffered enough for it. What if any accident should happen to the train, and I should never see him alive again! It almost makes me wild!

Then, too, Laura is very trying at times. She is industrious and orderly, and not impulsive; she never "flies out," but she is provokingly self-willed and obstinate. Her way is always better than mine; she never will give up at all, because she is the youngest. She finds fault because I leave things around, and slops in the basin when I dress; but I have always been accustomed to a chambermaid, and it is very hard to learn to wait on myself and other people too, at the same time. She has no care either; papa does not look to her for any thing, and the care is the hardest part of all.

I read the Testament as I promised Mrs. Waldron, four or five verses every day, but so far it does not do me a bit of good. I know the whole story, and it does not seem at all different; I wish it was all made up of rules, as the Old Testament is, part of it, and told me "you must do this, and you must *not* do that," so I should know all about it.

Mr. Ralph Waldron is religious. It seemed so strange in such a young man, but he stayed to the communion service Sunday before last, and looked surprised when papa rose to go out, and we all followed him. I am so glad we have that nice pew next to theirs; it was the only one to let, except near the door, and I was delighted when papa told us it was ours. Somehow I feel as if I had known the Waldrons all my life, they are such friendly people; and though I never can be intimate with any one again, I like to talk to Angelé almost as well as her mother. She brought some sewing, and sat with me Tuesday afternoon, and Mr. Ralph came for her, and brought us some beautiful flowers. He reads German, and thinks it such a pity that I should give that and my music up. I really enjoyed playing that dear old *Marche Funèbre* for him last night, for there are so many people who do not enter into it. He likes Chopin's music, and I have played over several of my old pieces this afternoon, to freshen them up a little. I believe it was the music that first took away this heavy pain from my heart; it has been a real pain, every time I have thought of papa to-day.

June 17th.

I am glad now that papa was so displeased

with me the other night when he came home, though it almost killed me then. I had been so restless and anxious about him all day, and so thankful to see him come home. I flew over the stairs, and said, "O dear papa, I am so glad you are safe home." I almost forgot that I was so greatly in fault, until he said, "Any one would think that you loved me, Augusta, if they did not know better." So cold and hard. His eyes looked so, too. I turned away without a single word, but I felt as if I was choking to death. When I do love him so! and try so hard to please him and make him happy. He never will know half how hard I try; nobody but God does! How hard it has been for me to learn to work, and go without things, and manage so as to make him comfortable!

I bolted the door and threw myself down by the bed, for I was so wretched that I could think of nothing but praying, just as it was when mamma died. I cried out just like a little child! "O God, please show me the right way!" Only that, but I said it over and over again, sobbing as if my heart would break, for I felt if papa began to be displeased with me, I might as well give up trying to do any thing. After a while I grew quieter, and went to the window, and leaned my head against it; and in the window-sill my Bible was lying. I remembered that I had not read my verses, so I turned to the place, and thought I could do that at all events. It was the last part of a chapter, about hiding things from the wise and prudent. So I read till I came to this—

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Certainly this was meant for me; for was I not struggling along, laboring, and heavy laden! How I longed for rest! how I have longed for it the past weary months, ever since my care came. How was I to find it? I read it over and over again, just as I had prayed, until I saw that it was by coming to Jesus to help us be like Him, that it meant that He was meek and lowly, and we must be so too.

I did ask Him to help me, the first time I had ever thought of Him as being able to, and then I thought, how can I begin? It seemed right for me to go to papa and tell him I had done wrong, hard as it was, and ask him to forgive me, because that was being "meek and lowly." He was talking with Arthur, and Laura sat in the room sewing. It made it very hard, particu-

larly as Laura had heard what papa said, and looked up at me in a very provoking way when I came in. But I went straight up to the table and said, "Papa, I was very rude and impertinent this morning. Will you please forgive me, and I will try and not offend you again."

I could not help my lips quivering, for all I tried to be so brave, and I know papa must have felt that I was really sorry, for he drew me down and kissed me without another word. I don't think any caress he ever gave me went to my heart so, and all the dreary feelings melted away. Laura went out of the room, and Arthur was much pleasanter than he had been for a long time, and did not make a single disagreeable remark. Lily was in trouble about something, and came in crying after a little while, so I proposed putting her to bed myself, though Ellen has always seen to them at night.

She seemed glad to go, for she was very tired and heated; I sponged off her little hot face, and neck, and arms, and she looked up so gratefully and gave me a loving kiss, quite of her own accord. Then I took her in my lap, and told her a little story, and after she had said her prayers, and her dear little head nestled into the pillow, she made me stoop down to give me "a great hug," and said, "I do love you ever and ever so much."

I have not felt so light-hearted in a long, long time, or so happy, as I did then, and have ever since. It woke with me to-day, instead of that miserable, tired feeling. I don't know why, but I keep thinking of Christian when he came to the cross that stood in the way, and the three shining ones met him. I almost feel as if I could "give three leaps for joy," as he did.

(Conclusion next month.)

## THE FROZEN HEART.

## A WOMAN'S STORY.

BY MARY W. JANVRIN, AUTHOR OF "PEACE," "AUNT BETHIAN'S VISIT," "JACARPA'S JOURNAL," ETC. ETC.

(Concluded from page 435.)

WHEN I followed Lionel Rossiter from the old stone house, his wife, the clasp of his hand on mine was firm and assured; nor did he need to lift me like a child to the elegant carriage at the end of the avenue, for outwardly I was calm and self-possessed as he. But perhaps, with his subtle intuition of hearts, he read the smothered emotions of mine when I was dumb under my mother's mildly-spoken blessing, and when I bent to leave a kiss on Eddie's cheek, whereon the splendid damask rose of consumption had never bloomed so vividly as the morning he saw me wedded, for it had been my wish that the ceremony should be performed in our dear invalid's room. All this bloom, and the strength which came to the dear boy that June morning, cheated me.

"Lionel, do you not think Eddie seems a great deal stronger? How well he looked, this morning!" I said, as we rode along. "It would not be so strange if he grew well again."

"Darling, you worry too much about the boy; he may outlive you and me; so cast out boding fears. I shall be jealous of even your brother now; remember, I am a selfish husband!"

It was not so much the words or the manner, as he passed his arm round me, that struck a chill to my heart; but, for the first time, I realized the strength of the will to which I had submitted myself as I caught a glimpse of the smile creeping over the deep lines about his lips. I thought of myself and Eddie, parted as by a wide gulf of death, or some dim, undefined evil. A chill ran through my frame.

"You are cold; you shiver; let me fold this thick blanket shawl about you. I think you are nervous, Mildred, and I beg you to endeavor to conquer it, for I dislike nervousness exceedingly!" said Mr. Rossiter. "Are you sick?"—noticing that I still shivered violently.

"No; I am perfectly well, thank you!" I answered, throwing back the shawl which he held round me with his arm. "It is the change in the weather, I think; there is going to be a cold rain storm"—and I glanced up to the clouds which had gathered and shut the sun-

light from the sky. "An ill omen on my bridal morn!" I added, with a forced smile.

"Let the storm come—we will not care. I will shut out the disagreeabilities of the ride," said Lionel, drawing the sash and the silken curtain, for a few drops had plashed against the carriage window, while a chill wind that seemed to blow backward out of November moaned sullenly among the trees that bordered the roadside. "You had better lean your head on my shoulder, and try and rest now, Mildred, for the journey is long, and we shall ride these many hours yet. I will rouse you when we stop for a late dinner. It will be evening ere we arrive at home."

But though my head lay upon his shoulder, and his arm was around me, bringing a kind of surging bliss to my heart, yet, involuntarily, I thought of Eddie sitting patiently in his sedan-chair, and of that day when we two talked of Lionel. Were his words true—a *prophecy*? Was my husband already manifesting the "proud, selfish spirit which loves only the bright side of life?"

The home to which my husband took me was a marvel of architectural taste and beauty without, the perfection of refinement and elegant luxury within. In the old brownstone house of my maidenhood we had always lived in the enjoyment of all needed comforts, and many of the luxuries of life, for my mother's annuity permitted this (my father, I should have told you, was a naval officer, and the widow received an annual stipend from government); but here, had I been at all given to childish expressions of delight, I must have excessively amused Mr. Rossiter, as, leaning on his arm, we walked through the library and long drawing-rooms of my new home. But I suppose he read my intense pleasure in my flushed cheeks and gleaming eyes. I remember I did not utter much; it was not my way when anything pleased me. Oval pictures, leaning down to greet me with the warmth and flush of southern skies and landscapes; book-cases shelved with the lore of ages, from the illuminated or black-letter missal of olden monks in

Carthusian monasteries to the blue and gold of modern poets; carpets ankle-deep in Sorrento roses; a magnificent grand piano and gilded harp; chairs and couches of various patterns, all exquisite in grace and finish of carving, and inviting to luxurious repose; statues suggestive of the pure Grecian type of beauty, and that mythological age "when the gods came down to dwell with men;" Etruscan vases, and vases stained with the ruby red of the vintage that is pressed on the banks of the Rhine; crimson velvet curtains in whose warm tide of light my cheeks were bathed in deeper glow; a lavish profusion of gorgeous flowers and costly *bijouterie*. All these spoke eloquently to a nature which craved the luxury of beautiful surroundings as did mine, and I walked as in a kind of entranced dream through the apartments. At the end of the long drawing-room, Mr. Rossiter opened a door which unfolded a miniature fairy-land within to my gaze. If the drawing-rooms had been splendid, *this* was gorgeous in the extreme. A little apartment crowded with statuary, couches, and crimson cushions, a trickling fountain, pictures of dreamy light and warmth, everything rich, oriental, magnificent.

"And this is the sultana's *boudoir*," said Lionel, after noting with a quiet smile the wondering gaze with which my eyes turned to his as I paused on the threshold. "Let us enter." And he closed the door behind us.

"Your *harem*, you mean, my lord pasha!" I retorted, laughingly; "for it is like a Bosphor-ian palace, so Eastern in its furnishing. I shall call you 'my lord' here, an' it please you!"

"As you will," replied Lionel, with a gratified smile. "How like you your apartment, Mildred? It pleases you, does it? I hoped your tastes would accord with mine. The furnishing is after my own design."

"I thank you a thousand times, my lord! Everything is *more* than beautiful. Please imagine me dumb for the loss of words wherewith to express admiration, most august pasha!" I replied, gayly. "But, remember, the bird that sings in so gilded a cage must be no common songster; the queen of the harem must be *grand sultana*! Why not call me by that title, my lord?"

"Let the chains be light then wherewith you bind your captive," said Lionel, carelessly, throwing himself on the cushions at my feet, "for I love not despotic rule."

"And yet you would not admit yourself other than *master* of the harem? Your tastes

are Eastern!" Some impulse beyond my control seemed to urge the words: "You would not hesitate to hold the sack and bow-string as a rod of terror before the favorite's eyes who failed my lord pasha's obedience?"

The lines about Mr. Rossiter's mouth grew deeper. "You talk strangely, Mildred! I did not fancy you thought of 'rebell'ing yet. I believe I should hardly care to live with a woman who failed 'obedience' to her husband's judgment and wishes. But come, we are foolish to talk about these things when you have given yourself to me. Sing to me now, my love!" And he passed the ribbon of a guitar round my neck. "How sober you look! Are you tired? I don't like to see you look in that way; liveliness suits me best, Mildred. Sing something gay to me."

Mechanically I took the instrument, and breathed, in accompaniment to its strings, a little Italian *ritornello*, such as Consuelo might have sung to Anzoleto, on the lagunes of Venice. And it was an Italian light, a soft, rosy, subdued glow, that penetrated my little boudoir through the vine-wreathed window and the tinted curtains; but it could not hide, though it might soften, the deep-marked lines about Mr. Rossiter's lips. The chain was of flowers, but it was firm as a band of iron round my heart.

I can scarcely tell when or how the first furrow of division was ploughed between the waves of our married hearts, widening, deepening, till, from intensest devotion, came a more ordinary love, then the ceremonies of a common politeness, then sometimes, on Lionel's part, a coldness; but I know that I was not so happy as I had expected in my wedded life. The exacting claims of my husband, who denied me the freedom of society, or who, if he brought guests to the house, as he sometimes did, stipulated in my conduct a reserved dignity to them and an almost childish devotion to himself, thus restraining my natural ease and quietness of manner, wore like a fetter upon me. If he had but left me to become the arbiter of my own conduct, possessed fullest faith in the love of a wife who, though brought into contact with the society of intellectual and elegant men, could never swerve from her husband, treated me less a child and more a woman, it had been far better. This jealous *espionage*, this guardianship à la despot, galled me. But yet I had not failed in outward token of tenderness to my husband, though his conduct pained me as unworthy one who professed his faith in

the sacred marriage rite by taking its vows upon him; yet never by word or manner did I betray this. If at times my high spirit chafed at his hard rule, I laid upon it the conquering hand of submission, and it lay down like a tamed lion in its cage.

I suppose when I left my mother's house the ghost of distrust followed me silently, for by and by it began to dart out upon me suddenly, to startle me with its phantom form, to be banished with loathing and terror, but never, alas, to be wholly laid again. Had I but met that revelation which my mother offered, but which my pride forbade, I think now that the *reality* would have been far better than the brood of suspicions which in these days began to engender in my mind. As I have said, I grew suspicious—first, because of Lionel's sudden moods of coldness or jealousy; and when, by and by, he began to make long absences from home, from whence he never failed to return moody, irritable, or petulant, I grew most unhappy and miserable. What meant these absences? He surely had no business affairs kept secret from his wife! A thousand wild jealousies were gnawing at my heart. Why did he not confide fully in a wife's entire love then? It had saved how much misery afterwards!

But I was about to write of our first rupture. Mr. Rossiter had been from home on an absence longer than usual. I had been expecting him for days, and it was wearing late into an afternoon early in May, a chill, cloudy afternoon, when I returned from visiting a poor sick woman in our vicinage, to find him arrived, and lying, apparently sleeping, on a couch in my boudoir. His breathing came regularly; his face was turned toward the wall, and looked tired and worn, I thought, as I went up to the couch and leaned over him. "He is weary with the journey," I mentally said, stooping down to kiss him. As I remained leaning above him for a minute, I noticed the fingers of one hand thrust into his bosom among the loosened folds of his vest, and saw something glittering there. I drew it forth—a slender chain of gold, attached to which a tiny locket! By nature, I was never curious, but I could not resist the spell which urged me to gaze upon the miniature it encased, to look upon the pictured face—the full red lips, the melting blue eyes, the oval cheeks, framed in long, light, golden curls!—a face which I should have recognized anywhere, had I encountered it on earth, so indelibly was it stamped on my mental retina then. In another moment, a heavy hand was laid on my shoulder, and I

started, to meet the stern, fixed, angry gaze of my husband. I thrust the miniature into his hand with a passionate, scornful gesture; but my eyes were not lowered beneath his as he rose to his feet, intently regarding me; instead, my level, haughty gaze beat down his own for a moment. But he rallied. Anger quivered in his tones. "Madam, how *dare* you! To take unworthy advantage of a sleeper! This is a new phase in your character, Mrs. Rossiter, this prying curiosity!" "Could he be *guilty*, and talk *thus*?" I mentally reasoned. "Have I wronged him?" And, with a sudden reaction of tenderness, I kissed his hand. He drew it away haughtily. "You kiss and kill in the same breath, madam!" he sneered. A thousand fiery serpents of passion were roused in my breast. "Pardon me, if I kissed you, unknowing you preferred other lips to mine; I will not repeat the offence. Go to your *par amour*; go, and—" His hand closed on my arm like iron, forcing a cry of pain instead of the words he interrupted. "Mrs. Rossiter, no more—not another word! Is *this* in accordance with your promise of entire faith and devotion—this prying into your husband's affairs, this burst of anger! The original of *this*—you need not fear *her* now"—and he returned the locket to his bosom—"for, but two days ago, I saw her lying in her coffin." And a strange, agonized expression for a moment blotted out those deep lines about his lips. "Whatever I may have been before I met you is nothing to you now; at least, it *would* be nothing, if you loved me as you professed before you married me!" He went on passionately: "I tell you, madam, I cannot bear contradiction in any form—I *will* not!" And his lips closed like iron. "By Heaven, if I had thought you capable of enacting the *rôle* in which I have just seen you, I would never have married you—never, by—" I will not write the word here; but it was the first time I had ever heard my husband utter an oath. Had he struck me, I could have borne it; but that fell on my heart like an ice-bolt. I crept away.

Mr. Rossiter's anger continued for days. That night, he did not join me at the tea-table, nor come to me as I sat at the library that evening; and when the morning came, my pillow was wet with tears, and his own beside mine unpressed. The presence of guests in a few days brought us again in contact. At table, he conversed or did assistant honors with his wonted courtliness; but with their departure he relapsed into the chilling haughtiness of that day. I could see that he had not forgiven

For weeks, the constant uprising of my own proud temper, which had shaken off the chains of blind submission, forbade my making advances toward a reconciliation. "I will not go to him as a child," I said, indignantly. "If I uttered a wrong word, his own anger provoked me to it! And it was not wrong—my looking at that miniature; a husband has no right to have any secrets from his wife. She is dead, he said, and I am glad—glad! I wish I had died before I saw him!" But then a thought of my mother's warning rushed over me, and I saw that I had none other than myself to blame; I confessed this with a deep sigh. Then a thought of all the past rushed in like a flood—the wild love I had borne him then, the vow I had made—"If he has sinned, I will redeem him!" I felt humiliated, shocked. I had rejoiced in the death of one who had loved perhaps wildly as I, and perhaps she had suffered, too; I had turned against my husband, who, perhaps, had suffered also! Though he had wronged me, yet would I forgive him; I would go to him. "He may repel me, but I will not be repelled," I said. "There is a concession which comes more gracefully from a woman than from a man's proud heart, and I will offer it. It is not in reality the weaker, but the wiser, who makes the first advances toward a reconciliation."

I went to him that day, laying a firm grasp on the fires of my volcanic heart. I said: "Lionel, I cannot bear this life—forgive me!" I think now that my supplication, "Forgive me!" pleased him more than any desire for reinstatement in his affections, for he smiled his old smile, in which I read his love of rule; though I scarce cared then, so he loved me again, *how* he forgave me. But he must needs punish me a little longer yet. The monarch, though he *pardons*, never *unbends*. He did not kiss me, but he reached forth his hand, half tenderly, half patronizingly, saying—

"I am glad you have seen the necessity of this, Mrs. Rossiter; it must never occur again!" Then he added, noticing my pained look: "But let it all pass. I do not fancy estrangement myself, Mildred."

And *this* was our reconciliation. No love-kiss, no taking me to his heart; only a thin crust, the *scoriæ* of selfish policy, bridged over the yawning volcanic fissure that lay between us! Was it a reconciliation?

Weeks followed, and one day there came a letter from my mother. It contained one passage that struck a thrill to my heart: "Dear Eddie seems to be sinking; it is gradual, but,

I think, not to be mistaken. He has hardly touched his brushes or pencils the past winter, and these bright June days bring him no strength. He talks of you constantly, Mildred, and wishes you were here." No request, no command! Dear Eddie! But I would go to him.

"Mr. Rossiter," I said, carrying him the letter—I had never called him Lionel since our frigid reconciliation—"mamma thinks Eddie is failing. He wishes to see me; I would like to go to him. If you are not well enough to accompany me, I will take Caroline with me in the carriage, and Robert will drive us very carefully. But perhaps you feel able to go with me? I should like this," I said, half timidly. I should have written that Mr. Rossiter had been confined to his room by temporary illness for the week preceding this.

"No, I am not strong enough to travel," he said, coldly. "Probably I can get on well enough alone. I dare say your mother is frightened about Edwin; but you can go, if you wish to."

"O Lionel!" rushed to my lips, with the tears to my eyes. I was about to add that, if he did not wish me to leave him, I would stay; but a voice rang in my ear—"Neglect not your brother! it may be too late!" And, bending down to kiss his cheek, I left my husband. My tears were left on *his* cheek, too; perhaps he felt them. I wept unrestrainedly while Caroline ordered the carriage and packed my trunk; and the good girl, pitying her mistress's grief for her sick brother, knew not of the heavier grief she bore away in her heart.

Dear Eddie! I found him in his old place at the south window, the sedan chair prone as a couch, the summer wind of the sunset hour giving aiding freedom to the laboring lungs, and lifting the damp masses of his chestnut hair. But there were no damask roses blowing on his hollow cheeks now; his face was white as the pillows; a violet hue bridged the slender aquiline nose, whose nostrils quivered faintly, and the hands were diaphanous as the delicate porcelain ornaments on the table. An unfinished picture stood on the easel; I have them now, picture and easel, as they stood then.

"I am glad you have come, sister," he said, with his sweet smile, drawing me down to kiss him. "Where is Mr. Rossiter? I thought he might accompany you."

"He has been quite ill, and I travelled rapidly," was my reply, the hot tears rushing to my eyes.

"Don't cry, sister. I have felt better all day; I can breathe quite easily now. Sit down here in your low chair as you used to, and talk to me. Let mother go and rest; she is quite worn down with watching me, for she wouldn't leave me day or night. There! now she has left us, we will talk, Mildred. Strange I can talk so easily to-night. Fix the pillows a little. There! so! You are looking at my picture; I meant to have completed it. It is for you, Mildred. If I never finish it, you will—"

"Don't, don't, Eddie! I cannot bear it!" And I sobbed on his pillow.

"But you *must*!" he said, tenderly and sweetly caressing my head. "Don't fear to talk about it; mother knows it all; we have learned to look at it with calmness, without fear. I was going to tell you about my picture, Mildred. You will think of me every time you look on it. Place it in your room—the room you sit and write in—so you can look up and think Eddie is there, painting beside you. If I had lived, Mildred—I mean if I had been well and strong, like I was in college—I should have gone to Italy; but I am going to a fairer country, where the skies hang always blue and the sunset glories never fade. Don't cry, Mildred! I shall *walk* up there!" And the dear boy pointed away beyond the western sunset clouds whose fluted amber pillars, resting on square blocks of gray, seemed to upbear the jasper walls of a city, the beautiful City of Heaven. "I shall *swim*, too!" he added, with a brightening, childlike smile; "for, Mildred, I have learned in *this*"—and he laid his hand on a little worn Bible on the pillows—"that I must cleave the waters of the Jordan, and Jesus will stand to meet me on the hither shore of heaven. Sing to me, sister—

"Jerusalem, my happy home!"

And, sitting there by Eddie's side, with the sunset shadows creeping thicker, and the white rose-bush at the window drifting in a shower of leaves at Eddie's feet, while his hand lay in mine, I poured forth the tide of holy song—a song that seemed to lift my own poor, weary heart, as it did the dear invalid's exultant one, above the grovelling earth-life.

I ceased. The darkness settled deeper, till the drifted bank of white rose-leaves at our feet showed up but a faint speck in the gloom, and then my mother came in, and the old nurse, Marcy, brought in lights, but I motioned them away, for Eddie seemed calmly sleeping; so we sat silent, mother and I, with hushed breath.

A half hour wore by. "How soundly Eddie sleeps!" said my mother. "It has not been so

this long time, he has been so distressed for breath; but now he rests like a child." Her words roused me from a deep reverie. I felt for his hand which, unheeded, had slipped from my own; it was cold as ice! I screamed aloud. Marcy came running in with candles. But their light, streaming broadly on the white forehead and closed eyelids, woke not the sleeper—he had opened them *elsewhere*! The drift of white rose-leaves bathed his feet—his earth-life had perished before *they* began to wither! Quietly, peacefully, while I sat beside him in the twilight, perhaps even while I sang, his freed soul had leaped forward, naked, white, panting, to breast the waters of that broad river which laves the walls of the City of our God, the New Jerusalem.

I leaned on my husband's arm when I turned from Eddie's grave. Mr. Rossiter had come to the funeral; not, I think, because he had anything in common with our deep grief, but because he regarded the world's opinions, and that world would not be silent if Lionel Rossiter failed in token of outward respect toward his wife. But when the funeral was over, he said: "Mildred, you must subdue this intense grief; it is wrong. You could not expect your brother to be spared to you always; and you must remember that your husband does not like to see you in tears."

A bitter retort sprang to my lips: "You need not begrudge the tears given to the *dead*! I did not think you so jealous as *that*, Lionel Rossiter!" Oh, how miserable, how angry, how utterly desolate I felt! A little sympathy, a tender kiss would have saved me then, would have bridged over the chasm that opened at our feet, stayed the ice-bolt that sped into my heart; but they were denied me; instead, came words coldly, calmly spoken:—

"Mrs. Rossiter, you are mistaken in applying the word 'jealous' to me. I do not know its meaning. We will go home to-morrow, I think, where your husband can watch over your health, a regard for which should forbid this excessive grief and excitement. You will tell Caroline to have everything in readiness for our journey."

*He* "watch over me," *he* "not jealous!" when I had been sentinelled ever since I took his name, and now to selfishly deny me a few days at my mother's side! Why did he not render a return for what he demanded? Why expect the tropic flower to creep blossoming up his glittering, frozen heights, and then, if it shivered or grew pale in the chill airs, greet it with scorn? I was almost mad with contending



emotions. I could have hurled a torrent of reproaches upon him; but the sacred spell of Eddie's presence, lingering yet, restrained the bitter words on my lips.

"I will be ready to accompany you to-morrow, Mr. Rossiter," I said, calmly.

"That is right, Mildred. I am glad you see the propriety of this. You will be happier at home, and your mother can come to visit you, by and by." And he laid his hand on mine. But I flung off his touch, I turned from his presence, I rushed into Eddie's room, and, locking the door behind me, went to the south window, now draped with the heavy curtains, and knelt down, laying my head in Eddie's vacant chair; but I could not weep—a heavy weight, like a hand of ice, lay on my breast. I think my heart was frozen.

The tiny life that fluttered briefly into existence in the golden Indian summer flickered but for a moment, then went out again into that vast space crowded with human souls. I hope they did not jostle my baby rudely—so young, so tender! The warm rush of holy maternal love that surged up blissfully into my heart, stirring its ice-bound waters, suddenly congealed again, leaving me chilled, hopeless, desolate! Had my baby lived, perhaps she might have proved the golden clasp to reunite the severed chain of divided hearts; for, though they told me Mr. Rossiter was disappointed that his wife had not borne him a boy child as heir to his name and fortune, yet I think it could not have been in man's heart—and that man a father—to deny a regretful tear to the wee perished blossom, in its tiny casket, they laid where the crimson and gold-colored autumn leaves fluttered down continually, like a flock of flame-winged birds alighting on its little grave. Perhaps he was at first softened toward me—I do not want to judge him too harshly—and I know Mr. Rossiter had looked forward with earnest anticipations to this event; but I suppose the disappointment hardened his heart again, for he did not mingle a tear with those that day by day wetted my pillow. Yet do not fancy that he neglected me, as neglect goes in the opinion of the world. It came to be a talk among people—the devotion of Mr. Rossiter to his pale wife, how gently he lifted her to the easy-cushioned carriage, how he brought servants to obey her slightest bidding, how he was a model for devoted husbands. Sometimes they came to me with his praise. My mother, who had come to me also, in the time of my trial, acknowledged that once she pre-

judged him too harshly. I smiled; none read what lay beneath the glitter and the flowers.

I used, in those days, to envy the poorest laboring woman who came to perform the menial offices of my kitchen—the coarse, unlettered, but contented woman, with the mother-love in her heart and the tender mother-smile on her lips for the strong, rosy baby who crowed, laughed, or clapped its tiny hands, on the floor beside her at her toils. Why were *such* people granted what God had taken from *me*? Enough, and to spare—a half score of tumbling, healthy children, while my one wee, waxen baby had been taken? There was bitterness in my heart against Him. I, who had so loved children, who had looked forward with intensest yearnings to the holy joy of motherhood, who had covered the walls of my room with faces of the Madonna and the Child! I sent the pictures away; I banished all tender associations from sight or hearing. I did not urge my mother's stay; I shut myself in a selfish solitude, and into that solitude I only took my deep grief, which, like Rachel's, "refused to be comforted," sitting for hours gazing on Eddie's unfinished picture, fit type of the unfulfilled dream of boyish promise dashed out from the glowing canvas of life. And if I prayed at all in those days, it was only that dark Atropos might sever the thread that kept me from lost Eddie and my babe.

Months have fled. Health has come back, and with it *his* commands, which force me again into the outer world, to taste its gilded apples of pleasure, that are as ashes on my lips. Yet, though I walk *with* the world, I am not *of* it. I smile on all; I render passive obedience to my husband's wishes; there is a show of peace between us; and the world looks on, and says, "A happy pair!" But whether I smile or sing for Lionel Rossiter, I wonder if he never thinks of those auroral fires that fling a soft, rosy glow above a frozen world of ice.

I had never thought to take pen again to add aught to this record of my heart's life; but I *must* write here of that new, wonderful happiness which is surging up through the unsealed waters of my being; it is like a resurrection from the dead. The hand of God, laid heavily, in long, terrible illness, has done for Lionel Rossiter what the pride, or coldness, or tenderness, even, of human hearts could never do. Starting back, affrighted, from the verge of the dim land of shadows, whence pale fingers seemed reaching to beckon him, taking hold again on the earth-life, and, with it, planting

his feet on the Rock of Ages as his stand for all the future, he is a humiliated, softened, changed man.

He has told me all—that record of a giddy, headstrong youthtime—how the siren Pleasure tempted him in manifold ways, with gay companions, the dice, and the wine-cup. But this one story, of which I had caught glimpses hitherto, and which had roused suspicions that had embittered my married life, was not so wholly bad as I had imagined; in thought, I had wronged my husband.

"Mildred, I never wilfully betrayed innocence," he said. "I have had my faults of character, but, thank God, of this crime I stand innocent! There is a passage in my life it were better I had told you earlier. Mildred, I was a *married*, but *divorced* man, when I met you! Do not ask me *why*, within the limits of two short years, I parted from one whom I had loved with the first ardor of my boyhood, for I was scarce more than a boy when I wedded her. It is enough that, under shelter of my name, she forgot the duties of a wife, and—But, Mildred, I cannot blame the *dead*; let her faults be buried with the sod that covers her.

"I will only say that when we parted—she angry and humiliated—I was left a scornful mocker in woman's faith or virtue. Time passed, and I met you; I had met your *thoughts* before in your world-given creations. But why recall that time? It is enough that I loved you, and with such a love as I had never thought to feel for woman again. The way was clear before me. My past life was unknown to you, for, in order to avoid the world's scandal, she who had borne my name and myself had separated in mutual silence; I was free to woo and win again. But I vowed never more to trust my faith with woman unless convinced of a devotion so thorough that neither man nor angel could wrest it from me; and when I saw that this *was* mine, even as jealousy is said to 'grow by what it feeds on,' so did my arrogant selfishness. I felt a kind of savage pleasure in subduing this worship to my will—in knowing I was monarch, you my slave.

"We were married. I suffered not my rein of rule to slacken; the pleasure was so exquisite, I allowed it to grow and become a part of my nature. There was a brief dream of happiness. *Then she came!* You never knew, Mildred, that she sought me *here*, in our own house, avowing that she would force her way into your presence, and declare that she had borne my name before you! She was almost insane with rage. You never knew that I bought her off

from that revengeful purpose with *gold!* Perhaps *that* was what she came for; at least, she clutched at it eagerly, and went away seemingly pacified. She wrote to me afterwards, reiterating her threat. I went to her; I paid her, from that time, stated visits, to place in her hand stated sums as the bribe against her invasion of our domestic peace with the tale I would not for worlds should have reached your ear. You must see that I loved you, Mildred, in those days, else I had not been this weak bond-slave to her threats; you can see now the pride which forbade my going to you with the whole story, and placed my trust for your forgiveness and hope for our future happiness in your wisely devotion. Yes, Mildred, I loved you, even while I tightened the rein of an unmanly selfishness about you, even while my own arrogant spirit placed the ban on confidence and trust!

"But I must speak again of *her*. The period for my visit came round; I went, and *this* time to find her, not with angry invective on her tongue, but ill, wasting, dying! I remained. Ah, Mildred, had you known *all*, you had surely pardoned your poor husband! I closed her eyes; I sealed the poor, repentant lips; I held the thin hand, once mine at the altar, when life fluttered out from its pulses; I followed her coffin to its grave; I bore back to my home that locket which enshrined her face when she had been younger, purer, and I had loved her! God knows what I suffered, Mildred! you can never know! There may have been no traces on my countenance, but there were furrows in my heart. Remorse was gnawing me, and blame was for a time transferred from the dead to the living. Perhaps I had been too stern, too unforgiving! But a sense of duty, also my deep love for yourself, recalled me. Had we met in a different mood then, perhaps I might have thrown myself on your confidence; but you know what followed. I do not blame you, Mildred; it was but a natural suspicion, though I deemed it unjust then, and boldly resolved to beat it down with my iron pride and will. How far I succeeded, you remember; it ended in the gradual widening of the gulf between us.

"But there is a revelation; I must not withhold it *now*, Mildred. There! look at me so, with your soft, tender eyes, my wife! There is a child—*her* child and *mine*. He is a five year old boy now. I have kept him in the household of a good old man, a minister of the Gospel, who knew *her* in her earlier days, who knew us both. This boy—Mildred, the heart

of a father yearns for his child, sometimes—I have a request—God took our own babe—but no! you cannot, you will not consent to behold him! I have deceived you too long; you will not let my boy come to me?”

But I did. I sent for him, he was brought, a winning boy, with his father's forehead and his mother's beauty—God keep him from her errors! Lionel's child is my own now. We have named him Lionel Rossiter. Whether I am granted to know the sacred mother-tie in the future or denied it, this boy will never be cast out from my fostering love. The world about us is, perhaps, busy with its speculations; but I am above its comments or its idle wonder. I am a changed woman now. I have learned that humanity is weak and erring, and that it is not for me to hold aloof from another, saying, pridefully: “I am better than thou.”

Dear Eddie's presence is about me constantly. I never look upon his unfinished picture on yonder easel but I seem to catch a glimpse of a smiling, saintly face enframed in chestnut hair.

My buried baby!—the crimson leaves of a second autumn have fluttered down upon her tiny grave.

My mother!—she often sits beside me, with her placid smile and the look of resignation in her gentle eyes, satisfied to bide her time till she, too, is called to “Cross the River” to join again her lost and sainted waiting there.

My husband!—in his changed, purified, cherishing affection I abide content. Thank God, it is past now, that long arctic night amid the frozen ice-floes of estrangement, and we have gained at last the clear “Open Sea” of Married Love and Trust.

## THE ORDEAL; OR, THE SPRING AND MIDSUMMER OF A LIFE.

BY ALICE B. HAVEN.

(Concluded from page 421.)

### CHAPTER V.

"I do hope we shall have good places. It's so nice having reserved seats; I don't believe I should have come at all to-day, if we had not had tickets for them." It was little Miss Perkins, who hurried along Benefit Street at a far more rapid pace than was usual with her. "Dear me, Lucy, how fast you do walk? Do you think there is any need of quite so much hurry?"

"You know how early people go, just as well as I do, Jane; and Henry charged me not to get crowded by the door of a pew, or I should not be able to see at all. Just look at all those ladies! We are not the only ones that have reserved seats." And so they hurried on until they came to the old church which had been the scene of Commencement Day triumphs from time immemorial.

Already, a rainbow-hued crowd fluttered up the aisles, and stretched around the front seats of the broad galleries, like a row of tulips bordering a grass-plot, heralds of the mass of humanity, masculine, feminine, and juvenile, that would pack the whole house to suffocation two hours later. The young girls paused in the broad aisle, and nodded to Ella Beckford, stationed in the choir, close to the grand organ that had pealed out Old Hundred at midnight at the close of the Commencement sermon. Miss Perkins, quick to discern acquaintances, for all the eyeglass that proclaimed near-sightedness, waved her fan here and there, and shook her parasol in recognition, while Lucy Bradstreet, her companion, satisfied the guardian of the reserved seats that they had claims to be admitted to them. Already, nearly every pew in the inclosed space had one or two occupants, and it was some little time before the fastidious Miss Perkins could decide where to bestow herself and her flounces. To be seen was quite as much her object as to see, even though the front pews were sure to be filled with grave old doctors of divinity and unattractive trustees. There were distinguished strangers always scattered here and there among them, and that delightful George Cashing, who wrote those clever stories for *Harper*, was expected, and the poet of yesterday was

young and handsome. Besides, the aisles were always filled, and there was an opportunity for some of the gentlemen to slip along and chat while the band was playing. So, in spite of Henry Bradstreet's admonition, Jane Perkins was determined to sit as far forward as possible, and next to the door of the pew. The one in which she finally consented to settle her redundant array, after trying several that proved unsatisfactory, had a single occupant. "Quite as good as nobody," remarked Miss Perkins, in a tone that was far from being a whisper. Miss Perkins had reference to any oversight that might be exercised upon her little schemes for the enjoyment of passing flirtations. The lady did not look like a person who would interfere with or remark upon her young neighbors. She had a calm, grave face, so familiar that Lucy bowed as she came into the pew, and then checked herself in the fear that she had made a mistake. But it drew her to look at her neighbor again, and again. The thin, oval outline, the firm lips, the pale brown hair parted away under the plain bonnet-cap, were strangely familiar. She was evidently a lady, though her dress—all of stone-color and black, though it was not mourning—was not in the prevailing style, and her bonnet was unfashionably large. She looked at the long, slender hands quietly crossed, noted the absence of all ornament, and then turned away, lest her stealthy glances should be noticed and counted rudeness.

Faster and faster came the throng; fans fluttered in the galleries—a tulip-bed now—and the spaces around them grew less and less. Jane Perkins stood sentry for their pew, politely unconscious of the faint efforts of several individuals to occupy the two seats remaining, and the warning injunctions of the usher, "Five ladies in each pew, if you please." Airy French bonnets and Chantilly scarfs marked the fashionable city ladies who had come to witness the *débat* of some son or brother; and toilets quite as elegant, though not so novel, and a certain broad, slightly *blasé* look, those residents of the elegant mansions near the College who had seen the rush and parade of many Commencements, and wished the programme

There were the College people, the well over. There were the professors and trustees, who were personally interested in many of the actors in the brief drama about to be performed, and chance pleasure-seekers, who had no feeling save in the amusement of the passing hour.

Lucy Bradstreet looked around upon them, and remembered how often and how eagerly she had anticipated this day; and, now it had come, was there a heavier heart than her own in all that great multitude! Her brother had done well, much better than they had hoped—thanks to the generous emulation with which his friend had inspired him—and his friend had won the valedictory; but it was indeed a valedictory—parting words to her, as well as to his classmates. She knew he would leave next day, and that their lives were henceforth apart; it was an ever-present thought.

"How tiresome!" Miss Perkins had been a faithful sentry, but even her calm obliviousness of the numerous modest attempts to pass her could not prevail against the sister and cousin of young Martin, one of the graduates, who considered their right to the pew quite as good as Jane Perkins's, who had not a relative in College, as they knew perfectly well; and their parolists were quite as pointed as the one that kept guard at the desired threshold. They did not mind the cool stare of amazement at their temerity one iota. Miss Martin's father was a member of Congress, even though Miss Perkins did not choose her acquaintance, and two winters at Washington had not increased her maiden bashfulness; she was much the taller and more sweeping of the two, so Miss Perkins had rather the worst of the encounter as Belle Martin and her cousin pushed past, regardless of fringe and lace, and nearly twitched the sentry's mantle from her shoulders. Nor did the look of ineffable scorn and writhing contempt darted after them ruffle Miss Belle's serenity in the least. She had reserved tickets; she had fought for a good place, and won it; she was very much obliged to Miss Perkins for keeping it; and she made herself very comfortable.

Very different was the movement at the opposite end of the pew, where the lady made room for Lucy Bradstreet, and the young girl quietly and pleasantly acknowledged it. The stranger thought she had not seen so homelike a smile among all the unknown sea of faces that oppressed her, and made her realize her isolation. She had a quick eye for elegance and taste, for all the plainness of her own attire; and the snowy chip hat, with its blue crape and white moss roses, made its wearer like a lily of the

valley—to pursue the flowers—in the neighborhood of the full-blown Miss Martin, and even Jane Perkins's overloaded dress bonnet.

"They are coming!" telegraphed the quick-sighted little lady, drawing herself as far as possible from her unfashionable neighbors, while she availed herself of the elevation of a footstool to see the procession pass in. The tall, gentlemanly usher, with his blue-ribboned baton of office; the dignified and undignified dignitaries that followed; the short men and the spare men; the shining red faces bathed in perspiration, and the pale countenances indicative of much sermon writing and dyspepsia; the young men who had suddenly found themselves made doctors of law and divinity, to their own astonishment and the disgust of their rivals, and the old men who had worked fifty years for the Church and the world, with no public recognition of their merits, not so much as the moderatorship of an association; smiling, well-to-do business-men arm in arm with the minister of a country church, who had sent three boys to College on five hundred a year; the nervous Senior, whose heart beat fast as he recognized dear, familiar faces, and resolved to "do or die," and the callow Freshman, in his first tailor's snit, who imagined himself a conspicuous feature in the pageant; the noisy, brassy, unheeded band, who puffed away for the edification of small boys and young ladies from the country. Every member of the long, slow procession that made Commencement Day had filed in and bestowed themselves before Miss Perkins removed her eyeglass and subsided into her seat.

It was so provoking to be separated from Lucy, and to find the aisle blocked up with a quantity of women, after all; not a man among them, or even an acquaintance to whom she could say, "How ridiculous!" when Archie Cushing tripped on his gown and almost deposited himself on the floor of the stage; or, "What a pity!" when Ellis blushed and stammered, and lost the prompting that would have saved him from that awkward pause, fairly stage-blind at finding all that sea of faces turned up to his. And after a while, the band played again, and some gentleman friends of the Martins pushed along and talked over her in such a loud, vulgar way. Altogether, Miss Jane did not find herself as pleasantly situated as her caste-loving, admiration-seeking nature could have desired.

And Lucy, who had aimed less selfishly, would have desired nothing better than she had found; she could see perfectly from her more

remote corner of the pew; she had discovered her father next to Governor Green, his great friend and ally, in the fifth pew from the platform, as became so generous a patron of the college. She could see Henry, every now and then, moving about a little restlessly, for, after all the trouble he had taken to point out the most eligible seat to Miss Beckford, he was sure she would never be able to hear a word of his oration, with all those boys stamping about the gallery. What in the world did they allow such shavers to crowd up the church, any way? Henry had forgotten how he walked after the fascinating trombone and cornet players in the days of his own youth, and had eaten nuts and apples in the midst of an equally interested audience.

But above all there was a face in full relief against the dark pillar by which it leaned, a pale face, with large, luminous eyes that sought the nook which sheltered her with a constancy and boldness unlike their late chance intercourse. Turn when she would, Carrol Austin was looking towards her, and now and then his face seemed to light with intelligence and an earnest warmth that startled her, he had seemed of late so reserved and unconscious of her presence. What would the stranger near her think? for she had evidently noticed those glances, as how could she help it? But it was his last day, poor fellow, and her heart sank down like lead with the thought, and she clasped her hands with a wringing, nervous gesture, and tried to forget it again. Only once could she banish the thought—when her brother came forward, with his firm, manly tread, such a contrast to the hesitancy of some and automaton stiffness of others, tossed his clustering hair from his forehead with his own careless grace, and, in clear, ringing tones, drew back the wandering attention, and moved the listless faces before him into interest in him and his theme. It was a real triumph, and Lucy felt her cheeks glow with pleasure, and smiled back to her father's energetic and delighted nod. Mr. Bradstreet would not have changed places with Governor Green himself, at that moment.

"It was my brother," said Lucy, simply, to the lady in the corner, for there was an answering sympathy in her quiet face, as the young girl turned, still flushed and excited.

A strange glow, a sudden trembling of the mouth made Lucy wonder as she looked into the lady's eyes. The slender, ungloved hand was put out towards her own and then withdrawn. How the strange likeness to some

familiar face puzzled Lucy again! but it was only a fancy. The lady seemed very, very kind, as if she knew just how that little sister felt, when she whispered: "I congratulate you, my dear; I do not wonder that you are proud of him."

"Have you any relative in the class?" Lucy ventured to ask, for she wanted to see that smile again; it drew her towards the stranger irresistibly.

"My son—" but another speaker had appeared, and there was no time for explanation.

One more, and the Valedictory. A strange faintness came over Lucy, as she saw it was so near; she turned towards the fresh air from the window. The lady was very pale, too, and her eyes were fastened upon the stage, and her mouth had almost a painful compression.

How nobly dignified the tall figure of the Valedictorian seemed, in the sweeping folds of the silken robe that fell to his feet, as he stood for a moment without speaking! He did not trust himself with even a glance towards the dear face that was so near him now, but Lucy's eyes never left him until she felt a hand laid heavily upon her arm. The face beside her was bent down, and the frail figure was trembling with excitement. Lucy understood it all then; the revelation swept over her in a moment. She laid her hand in the long, slender fingers so unconsciously put forth, drew closer, closer to the bowed form, and whispered—"Mother!"

The craving yearning for sympathy in that day's trials and triumphs seemed suddenly filled, and the two women, so lately strangers, clung to each other until the last word of farewell died sorrowfully away.

Even strangers were moved by the earnestness of tone, the high self-devotion of the aims they listened to; they felt that a noble purpose, and an unlooked-for maturity of experience had found voice, and good men blessed him in their hearts, when they heard he was to enter their ranks, and prophesied great usefulness in the field their strength had been spent upon.

"Throwing himself away; fine fellow as ever was," said Mr. Bradstreet to Governor Green, while the hum of compliment and favorable criticism sounded around him; and, in spite of the soreness he at times felt when Carrol's name was spoken, he scarcely knew which boy he was most proud of as he folded up his programme to hear the president's "few remarks."

Yes, Commencement was over, to all but the hungry men, anticipating the bountiful public dinner they were now at liberty to turn to, and

the young girls who were prepared to look their loveliest at the evening's levee. Jane Perkins beckoned to her friend, and to a passing escort at the same moment; Lucy and Mrs. Austin stood up together.

"I am so glad that I have seen you," said Lucy, shyly, her face covered with a quick blush as she remembered her exclamation. But the kind eyes looked so lovingly down upon her—Carrol's eyes! and it seemed like Carrol's voice, too, as the lady said:—

"I shall not forget you, my dear child."

Poor, sad-hearted, lonely Lucy! lonely for all her father's kindness and her brother's pride; sad for all the wealth that was her portion, and the envy that pointed her out as she moved among the gay throng at the evening's brilliant reception. It was here she first knew that Carrol loved her, here in this very room, as she sang "I do not love thee." How happy she was that night, leaning on his arm, as they passed out of the door together; and now she could not even speak to him; only a bow, and such a lingering look as they passed! But her father was very kind. "It could not do any harm," he reasoned, as he thought that the boy was going to-morrow, and they could both be trusted.

"Good-evening, Carrol; you did well, to-day"—and he shook hands warmly. "I was proud of you. Can you take Lucy off my hands for a while? I must speak to my old friend, Senator Story."

So they were together once more, and alone, for no one remarked them in that busy crowd; and when they separated, with aching hearts, poor children, Lucy said: "Remember, Carrol, I will wait."

## CHAPTER VI.

"I WILL wait."

It was a promise given unsolicited, one that he was too generous to trust, for he knew all that she would meet with when once society had claimed the rich man's lovely daughter as its own. The homage, real and insincere, the love that she could not fail to attract, her father's solicitude for her happiness, the natural result of time and absence in wearing away the vivid remembrance of him, and the disenchantment of a fuller appreciation, a woman's knowledge of all she must give up for his sake.

So Carrol Austin did not rest upon that parting valediction; but, in spite of reason and of will, it haunted and comforted him—not that

he gave up to idle dreams—his life was too real, his work too earnest—but there were hours when the fulfilment of his noblest hopes seemed afar off, and the knowledge of all he was accomplishing for those who leaned on him, and the unswerving friendship of more than a mother's love, seemed insufficient to satisfy the craving for daily sympathy, for a nearer human companionship, and then the remembrance of these words came with a soothing like the touch of a soft hand upon his forehead. Lucy had loved him well enough to say it and believe it, however life might change her purpose, and he held her free as air to do so, only praying that she might be happy.

Hal Bradstreet and Ella Beckford were both married, but not to each other. They had children growing up around them, and laughed lightly at their childish flirtations. Jane Perkins was a fretful, faded wife, selfishly exacting, as such a nature could not fail to be in its full development; and her friend Lucy could but wonder, and sometimes chide the restless mourning of a life that outwardly would seem to have every desire fulfilled.

Lucy Bradstreet still, Miss Bradstreet now, living alone with her father, and entertaining his friends and the distinguished men he liked to gather around him with quiet dignity and composure, yet with the ease and grace of a woman of the world. No wonder that Governor Green used to say that she realized the old English epitaph,

"Polite as she in courts had ever been,

Yet good, as she the world had never seen;"

and it was especially kind, when it was generally supposed that she had rejected him, confirmed old bachelor as he had been considered.

Mr. Bradstreet did not advocate that marriage, flattering as the proposal was, for his friend had been groomsman at his own wedding, and, though well preserved, could not be more than five years younger than himself; but it was rather annoying to see all suitors, however wealthy or humble, transformed into steadfast friends. It never occurred to him that the foolish affair of ten years ago was underlying the reserve that so perplexed him. Lucy was the soul of truth, and he knew perfectly well she had never heard from young Austin, or he from her, unless indirectly, and he trusted to the wise man's saying, "Where no fuel is, the fire goeth out."

"We are to dine at Henry's to-morrow, Lucy, if you have no engagement, to meet some distinguished individual, I believe."

Mr. Bradstreet gave the intelligence casually

at the tea-table, and relapsed into the journal immediately.

"Did he tell you who, papa?" Lucy asked, with very little interest.

It was a soft evening in early summer, just such an evening as the one, ten years before, when, for the first and last time, an arm that was not her father's and not her brother's had encircled her. Something in the perfume of the flowers had recalled it vividly. A sharp pang of hope unfulfilled, a thought of a dreary, lonely future came with it. Ten years now since even the most casual intelligence had reached her, the election of Carrol Austin to the professorship of a Western college, a newspaper mention such as had told her of his ordination. But there was "fuel," in spite of Mr. Bradstreet's comfortable conclusion—the remembrance of that happy winter, the knowledge that he was steadily and successfully pursuing his course, and, above all, a deeper appreciation of the truthfulness, and honor, and utter self-sacrifice that had resigned her.

"Oh, did you speak, Lucy? Who? I really don't know. Some literary man and his wife, I believe, quite out of Hal's usual line. He's written a moral philosophy, or something of that sort, that they are going to adopt in college. I don't see why, I'm sure, when every one knows Dr. Cogshall's is the best text-book in the English language. Like everything else, though; can't be satisfied without this continual change."

So Miss Bradstreet made her simple toilet for her brother's dinner, without the slightest curiosity or even interest in his guests, and entered the dining-room rather late, to be presented to Prof. Austin!

"I took very good care not to tell her it was you, Carrol," said Henry Bradstreet, who was highly delighted with meeting "the friend of his youth." "She's a maiden aunt, you know, but a pretty good girl still—walks after the old gentleman and makes his tea in the most dutiful manner possible."

So he was married; her father had said his wife was to be there. Something had prevented it, for the rest were familiar faces; she would not ask what, for a dreary, benumbing feeling came over her. She had not looked for this as the end of her vigil; but it was human nature, and she had no right to expect anything different, when his last words had been—"No, Lucy, you must not say so; you are quite free!" She did not acknowledge what had kept her love alive, and how keen the blast that had quenched it. She thought it was faith in human nature

that had suddenly been darkened; and she listened, and replied, and was courteous, even gay, in her bearing through all that long, bountiful, wearying dinner.

She stood before the coffee-tray in the drawing-room, at her sister-in-law's request, when the gentlemen came from the table. It was a relief to have something to do, a shelter from the few words that must pass between them. She could not help seeing that manhood had developed the once slender figure into full and noble outlines, that the fair hair was thinned about his white temples, that he spoke with a deeper thought and utterance. There was no disappointment in time's work. She wondered if he thought her changed. She had found a gray hair two weeks ago! She was conscious of the sedate and thoughtful face that looked out from her mirror to her—that youth was over, and its illusions, alas!

"You do not ask for my mother, Miss Bradstreet." She started, for Mr. Austin had come directly to her. "My mother has not forgotten you, however."

"I have been remiss. I remember her distinctly." How often had that one meeting been lived over! and how firmly was the remembrance united to his! "She is well, I hope."

"Yes, and making my home happy, though she is a grandmother now, and my sisters steal her away sometimes."

"And Mrs. Austin—she is not with you to-day? You take no sugar, if I remember." For all her self-restraint, the delicate Sevres cup trembled in her hand.

"Mrs. Austin?—oh, my brother Ben is much too fickle to think of marriage even; even if he were old enough. He has more flames than our old friend Miss Perkins used to boast of."

"You misunderstand me. My father led me to suppose that I should meet Mrs. Carrol Austin here to-day."

"No, Lucy, forgive me, not unless he has withdrawn the old denial, not unless I am speaking to her now!" And, as in the old, old times, their eyes met, for the first that day; hers with sudden questioning, and his with a fond though reproachful look.

But they separated again without betrothal, unless a fuller and more perfect knowledge of the hearts and lives of each other formed it. Not that Mr. Bradstreet again denied his daughter's hand, she herself pointed out to her friend how impossible it would be to leave him, now that the habit and usage of a lifetime had made him dependent upon her for comfort and hap-



piness. But their separation was not in utter silence as heretofore, and Lucy learned, by the history of his growing honor and usefulness, that, even in this world, "he that forsaketh houses and lands, for his Master's sake, shall receive an hundred fold."

The day came at last when she saw the Western home of which he had so often written. It was to be hers henceforth, all that she could claim, for her father's house was already occupied by strangers, and her cares for him were ended. Almost half her lifetime had passed since she gave the promise she had so faithfully kept, and the frail figure that came forth to welcome her was already bowed with

advancing age. The brown hair was changed to silver, the face full of that repose which overshadows those who dwell in the land of Beulah awaiting the messenger of the King, and her kiss was like a benediction, when she folded the daughter she had so yearned over in her arms.

Mrs. Austin had seen her life-work well rewarded, despite many changes, many crosses, and more than one bitter disappointment; and now that her son's home was brightened, and his youth renewed with the accomplishment of all it had desired, she could fold her hands tranquilly, and say—"It is enough; now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace."

## THE ROMANCE OF THE BUCKSKINS.

BY C. A. H.

"But what shall I do for shoes, mother?"

"That's what I don't know."

"I'll tell you what I'll do! I'll cut up the old buckskins!" Ruth clapped her hands, like Archimedes.

"Child of mortality! what do you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Ellis, looking up at last from her apple-paring.

"I don't care! Father can't do no more than kill me, any way; and I shall have the shoes. I must have some, or how can I go to the ball?"

"That's true enough, child; and maybe he won't know. But I wouldn't be in your shoes, when he does find it out!" added the mother, half laughing, and half uneasy.

"I can't help it!" muttered Ruth, rummaging at the chest of drawers in the sitting-room, and drawing out the articles alluded to. In five minutes the buckskins were "past care, past help!"

Ruth brought her chair to the end door of the kitchen, sat down in the shadow of the sunshine, and made her fingers fly far more swiftly than the wheels of time.

"It's lucky your father's gone to the East Parish!" again said Mrs. Ellis, as if her fears would not down at her bidding, and she was trying to cultivate her hopes.

Ruth shut her mouth firmly, and spoke not. Already the shapely shoe looked as if it would dance of itself if it could only get out of her hands. The quarters were bound with narrow blue ribbon, and fastened to the pointed vamps; the pointed vamps waited impatiently for the spangles which were destined to cover them with glory. Already one could fancy the little feet, like "little mice run in and out" to the inspiring measure; already, *ex pede*, one could see that no Hercules was to spin on that fantastic toe. The smallest imagination could picture the slight figure poised on the spangled points, sparkling through the "heel and toe," or lost in the mazes of the double shuffle. Already one saw the long contre-dance, the lines of opposing forces standing and waiting for the signal for the onset. One could hear the long preparatory squeal of the violin, dying away

into lengthened silence. Then the sudden charge of Fisher's hornpipe, setting everybody on the *qui vive*! The feet that started down the outside, giving only the signal for the sympathetic blood, tripping all through the vast hall with electric rapidity. Who has not felt, as he watched the lithe figures in the intricacies of "money musk," or the abandon of the "Picture of America," that it was the most charming thing in the world to look on at a country ball?

Ruth had no notion of looking on. She was going to dance, and had her wardrobe all prepared. An easy matter, since she had but one dress; the same that the "old General" had bought for her to go to the "Walpole exhibition" in. In those days there was some limit to a lady's wardrobe, and therefore it will appear all the stranger, at first, that Ruth should not be better supplied in the article of shoes. If it is worth being disturbed about, it is worth explaining.

The ball was as far back as 1796. There was not much communication in those days between one place and another. From Westmoreland to Boston it was over seventy miles. And the transportation was carried on by means of dreary four horse teams that would often take five or six weeks to accomplish the journey there and back. To Boston went the staple productions of the country; from Boston came what our ancestors didn't do without any longer than they could help—tea and the like. The one storekeeper got his goods that way, and for many years after. As there was no encouragement among a sparse population for resident artificers, many of the conveniences and luxuries of life were brought to the doors of the inhabitants, and often exchanged for other articles. Ready money there was almost none among the early settlers. The matter of shoes was done up annually, and once for all, by the travelling shoemaker, who set up his bench for a week or two at a time, and made the shoes of all the family, oftenest of the hide previously prepared on the farm in an extempore tannery. Thus it came to pass that such young ladies as exhausted the supplies from the teamster were

light to their own ingenuity and taste; and it was not unusual to see the most elegant women providing themselves with pedestrious ornamentation at the expense of their own delicate fingers.

Ruth Ellis made hers bleed several times in pricking through the hard sole, even with the aid of the awl, which she plied with the dexterity of habitual use. But she returned to her work with renewed zeal, and before the afternoon sun had gone down behind the corn-barn, held up her shoes finished and blazing with spangles before her mother.

As she ran up stairs to put them away, and to finish her skein of spinning before night, she caught sight of the General driving down the hill, returning from his visit to the East Parish. Turning back a moment to roll up the package, from which she had made such a serious and ruinous piracy, she stuffed it into the farthest recess of the deep drawer, and again went more slowly to the back chamber.

Standing at the left side of the great wheel, drawing the roll of finest and whitest wool deftly and skilfully out, she twisted, as she prolonged the thread to a wonderful fineness, and stepped slowly back and forward, partly to the hum of the tuneful wheel, partly to the tune she herself hummed. To a blind listener there would have been something very peculiar in the tune, and very indicative of her state of mind. She sung snatches from the ballad of "Brave Wolfe," and at the end of every verse gave a triumphant refrain of "la! la!" which showed her contempt of the enemy wherever he was—whether over the water, or only over the way.

Ruth deserves to be described. But nobody will believe she could be pretty, dressed as she was. So her dress must be passed over with only indications; that she was pretty she could swear to herself, and her own opinion was sustained "up and down the river." Not a young man who was worth speaking to in all the towns round, but had been at her feet repeatedly. Wives were rare articles then, and to be humbly sued for and served for. Pretty women were rarer, for the same reason that black sheep were, and also because no beauty can long answer the demands made on it by hard, out-door labor.

Ruth Ellis had four brothers, and was the last of four daughters; consequently she was the pet and idol of her parents. She was at this time seventeen years old, short and delicately made, with as much plumpness as was consistent with a girdle half a yard long. This

girdle, however, was only a full dress article, and showed the possibilities of her shape. Her usual dress was adapted to her various avocations, and to the free play of all her limbs, artistic and convenient at once. The short gown and petticoat were as fit raiment for Aurora as for our grandmothers. All the dress needed was a suitable wearer; and Ruth, as she hummed her ballad, and whirled her wheel with alternate vigor and softness, looked in this wise. Imprimis, large, bright hazel eyes; item, small even teeth; item, the complexion of a gypsy, with the relief of a buttermilk wash every night, which made it as brilliant and rich as the richest fruit, and always reminded one of it; item, abundant dark brown hair, and a small nose, just a little turned up; very pretty plump white hands (the spinning kept them white and soft), and very nice little white feet, that went pattering up and down the cool floor to the sound of "Brave Wolfe's Address to his Army."

As she finished her skein of yarn, she heard her father's loud voice below, asking where she was. It was his usual question, to be sure, but the sound thrilled her from head to foot. Instead of running down, as her custom was, to meet him and hear all the news there was to be heard from the East Parish, she hesitated, took up her reel, and began reeling off the yarn from the spindle. She listened till she heard him go into the sitting-room, and then she drew a long breath, for she detected at once the flavor of the weed which composes the temper. Was she afraid of the General? A little, not much. Her trust was not in her own great love, so much as in his. But he was a violent tempered man. Accustomed from his boyhood to a military life, and most of the time in command, his habits and speech were imperious and arbitrary. Add to this the manners of the time, which prescribed undisputing reverence to parents, and it will be clear that the General was rather a terror to evil-doers, and visited all want of discipline with the utmost severity. His four sons, "whose length he laid on the floor" without the smallest hesitation at any disobedience, and whom he visited with personal chastisement from his own sacred hand, ran in different directions, but at all events away from him. At this period they were all gone away, and rather towards ruin. He had had the sorrow and vexation of paying money for them in various channels, where money was hard to get and harder to give. But disgrace was harder to have; and he was glad when the last one, Hezekiah, had fairly gone to

Canada, and he was likely to smoke his pipe without being tormented with fear and dismay at every whiff.

Now, if the General had been in good health, there was a chance for him to have a quiet old age. No grandchildren to write his epitaph, to be sure, but peace and quietness at his own hearthstone. Unfortunately, as he advanced in years he met the dropsy, and was unable to rout his enemy. With his vigorous and healthy habits, he had however held him some years at bay, and now only looked about the size of a "fine old English gentleman all of the olden time." His six feet two was able to carry off a large bulk without being unwieldy, and he had too much to do to allow him to cultivate sedentary habits. Not only did he attend personally to his own large farm, but he had two others, let out at the halves, to which he had an eye, besides being justice of the peace, deacon of the church, and general referee in all cases where the parties were too wise to go to law. It may well be supposed that the General had very little time to be a fretful invalid, and whenever Death came, it seemed likely the General would be too much occupied to mind much about him.

Meantime, he loved Ruth with all the love that was left in him. His wife was well enough, as he said, and "kept all straight in the house." She never disputed him, and managed her own and his affairs to his satisfaction. But after Lorana had been killed by the well-sweep, and Freedom had fallen into a kettle of boiling water; after Salome died of "an inward complaint;" and Persis had been swept off in one week with the smallpox, the General took Ruth in his arms and carried her up to the breezy hills of Walpole, leaving her there to go to school and get what health and accomplishments she could. There she had stayed four years, and learned her accidence and Rollin's history at the feet of men who afterwards made their country ring with their names. Then she came back to astonish the natives, and had so far fulfilled her destiny; though the General, whose early life had been much of it passed in Indian warfare, did not scruple in his impatience to call her "a hommock," or a "yappin rewardant," if she did not always answer to suit him; yet on the whole Ruth could not complain of any want of tenderness and kindness.

This evening she didn't come down till her mother called her to supper, by the voice of black Dinah. She discussed her bowl of brown bread and milk at the long table so silently

that her father asked her if she was well. Being answered in the affirmative, he only called for a reinforcement of bean porridge, which Dinah assiduously served from the great pot in the chimney corner. At the long table were six or seven hired men, who sat and ate their bean porridge in respectful silence. The General occasionally gave them directions for the next day's work, and otherwise held faint communication with them. It was somewhat patriarchal, somewhat democratic, and all American. When the supper ended, the men went off to their sleep, and the family special ascended to the sitting-room.

The sitting-room where Ruth stood by the window and looked out was gloomy and dull. The panels with which the walls were covered were black with the smoke of years, and a tradition of green paint. The heavy beam that crossed the room almost hit her father's head as he came towards the west window and seated himself in the great chair. The furniture consisted of a mahogany desk of the shape of Louis XV. time, and a chest of drawers of the same wood, that reached almost to the ceiling. On the top of these drawers were a china tea set and a blue glass pitcher, and in the corner of the room a small beaufet, containing a silver porringer, tankard, and some rare sea shells. The floor was sanded, and white India cotton curtains were looped up at the windows. Let us look at the General as he smokes his pipe.

A coat of "hemlock-dyed" domestic cloth, breeches of black ditto, and long stockings of blue cotton yarn. Added to this costume, and refining it without inconsistency, are gold knee buckles and linen of fine Hollands. The last articles had fallen to his share in some successful military expedition, where the English gentlemen and officers had needed to fly too swiftly to be encumbered with knapsacks. At all events, the General dressed in fine Hollands to the day of his death, and had some pieces for Ruth besides. The General smoked and thought. Thought of the same old things: the Dodge farm, and whether that fellow would pay, and whether the Davis lot had better be laid down to grass a year or two. Phil Fox seemed to think best so; and Phil was a smart chap of a boy. As the last thought crossed his mind he glanced towards Ruth. Ruth was leaning out of the window a little, and answering a question, which the General had not heard, and so he dropped off to sleep thinking still of Phil Fox, and what a good match it would make for Ruth.

Phil was one of the laborers on the General's

farm, at present. He had been helping the General get in his hay and thresh his oats. As to his person, he was at this moment talking to Ruth, and shall soon be described, a good deal as she saw him; and as to his social position, and suitability as a match for the prettiest and richest girl in Westmoreland, there was no question. He was the only son of old 'Squire Fox, who had kept the Red Tavern time out of mind, perhaps thirty years. To keep a tavern in New England was not only highly respectable business, but one which guaranteed and implied something more than common ability. Philip had, therefore, the prestige of his father's name as well as his own merits to stand on; and when the General drove up in his "bellows top," and stopped at the porch where Philip was that minute handing flip to customers, he addressed him with an air not so much of patronage as respect, and received his eager assent to the request to "help him a spell about his thrashing" as just the obliging thing it was, man to man, equal to equal, the lord was not greater than his servant. Phil was the smartest mower of the whole lot, and would get in more hay than any two of them all, and as a thrasher was worth his weight in gold. His having kept a dancing-school one winter was also an additional advantage, and he had been among the first to suggest the ball and carry out all its details to perfection.

During the process of eating the bean-porridge, Philip had glanced frequently towards the upper end of the table where, half hidden behind the brown loaf, Ruth took her bread and milk like a nymph, as she was; but no answering look gave him courage, and it was half an hour after supper that, having made a hasty toilet, Philip sauntered round to the front of the house if haply he might catch the eye of Ruth. As he found means to catch her eye and ear also with his first question, we will see how he looks:—

Tall and lithe, with a strong, hard-featured face, Phil had only two very handsome points about him. His figure was good enough, but his two good-looking eyes were full of roguish sparkle, and his hair clustered in chestnut curls that were nicely kept and trimmed. Powder, even for festival times, was falling into disuse, and the youths who affected most elaborate toilets did not go farther than to wear their hair in "a queue" down their backs. To plait the hair of a father or lover, and bind it closely with a ribbon, having at the termination a tasteful bow, was an occupation not unworthy the refinement of the young ladies of the time. Phil's

hair, however, refused to be dressed in this way; Nature was obstinate, and curled it close to his head. Nature was bountiful, and gave him grace of movement and the expression which is the soul of beauty. Phil had rather whispered than spoken, and that with a flush that spread to his forehead, and in a curt, decisive tone which did not look much like pleading:—

"I say, Ruth, shall I wait on you to the ball or not, say?"

"No," said Ruth; "I am engaged to go with somebody else."

"Humph! Earl Hyde, I s'pose?"

Ruth picked some hard-hack from the bush that grew outside the window, held it to her little turned-up nose, and was silent.

"I know it's Hyde!"

"Well, what if 'tis?"

Phil was not polite, nor much of a Christian just then, for he forgot himself and the young lady so far as to utter an emphatic execration, and turned abruptly away. In two minutes, Ruth saw him galloping off, and drew a little half sigh that had no pain in it.

The next day passed, and the next, and then Ruth was nearly ready for the ball by two o'clock in the afternoon. The ball was to be in 'Squire Fox's hall, of course, and began precisely at four o'clock. From four in the afternoon till four in the morning was not an unusual time to be occupied by the revellers, since they made their one orgie answer for the year.

It is astonishing how many matches were made, how many quarrels made and reconciled, how many uncertainties decided at the "Annual Ball;" that is, it would be astonishing but for reflecting on the manifold opportunities given by the amusement during twelve hours. Twelve hours well spent decided many a life; and this was so well understood in Westmoreland that the ball was the signal for much more preparation than merely fell to adorning the person. Ruth had herself thought many an hour on the subject this year; she had balanced Philip Fox and Earl Hyde time after time in her fancy without being able to come to any conclusion about either, and had left it to chance which should be her cavalier.

The windows in Fox's hall were skilfully shaded with colored paper, rolled up half way to let in the cool afternoon breeze from the broad Connecticut. The great chandeliers of bright tin were full of candles ready to be lighted. The benches that surrounded the hall were covered with bright, healthy-looking young girls and gay matrons, and all looking on

to see the Phil Fox dance a hornpipe. The young men, to the number of twenty or thirty, stood about in groups, but a large part were still uncollected, and it was considered only proper to wait a while and while away the time with single dances, till the whole flower of the country could be got together, when, as the custom was, the most important gentleman selected the most charming lady to "open the ball."

"Don't he look pretty?" whispered many a rosy lip to many an answering ear.

And Philip did. The grace of movement which was the essential quality of his manly figure pervaded every limb and informed every step. As the music followed his motions, and was slow or rapid as he went, he seemed to be following no stated rules, but to abandon himself to the luxury of musical motion with the buoyant ease with which a cloud is borne by the wind. All manner of intricate pirouettes, all the embroidery of dancing, so to speak, were so executed as to be subordinate to and to add a charm to his natural grace. As the last whirl brought him to his place with a firm and complete poise, and a bow to the company finished the exhibition, a spontaneous clapping of hands attested the delight of the assembly.

"It's real good natured of Phil Fox, ain't it?"

A murmur of enthusiastic assent followed, and Phil glanced pleasantly and cheerfully round at the admiring circle. No foolish scruples about making a show of himself once disturbed his self-respect. He had done what in him lay, as a host, in some sort towards occupying the dull waiting hour, and now he was anxious that two of his last winter scholars should exhibit their skill in a *minuet de la cour*. As he crossed the room to ask Mahala Dorr if she would stand up with Isaiah Longmeadow, his step faltered and his face turned scarlet. With a sudden jerk round, he brought himself in front of Mahala, and stammered his wish. Mahala was mistaken if she thought he was flushing about her, for no sooner had he set the twain opposite each other, and seen them sail forward and back, and one side and the other, after the manner of minuets, than he hastily crossed the hall and stood before Ruth. With a deep, reverential bow, and fixing his glowing eyes on her face, he asked her, formally, if she "would do him the honor to open the ball with him?"

Ruth smiled and blushed charmingly. She was so much pleased and flattered with the distinction that she forgot two things of some importance—one, that Delia Andrews, from one

of the seaport towns, who was a cousin and visitor at 'Squire Fox's, would naturally expect the position which was conferred on herself, a younger and much less important personage; and the other, that Earl Hyde would naturally and inevitably be angry that she did not dance the first dance with himself. Such was the etiquette, and she knew it; she knew it, but she had forgotten it, alas! what time she looked, herself unseen, at the graceful *abandon*, the exquisite marriage of sound and movement in the dancing of Philip. Every time the foot came lightly and firmly down, every time the swaying figure bent and rose to the music, her own little bright foot had beat responsive, and when he wound up with an obeisance in which all knightly courtesy seemed blended with all harmonious grace, Ruth stood with lips parted with admiration. It was this look which Philip had caught, and which sent the red blood to the curls on his forehead. After the two young persons had taken their places at the head of the hall, a place to which Philip was entitled as "first manager," and while the other couples were rapidly and hastily taking theirs in opposite lines, all this occurred to Ruth. She hastily looked towards Earl Hyde, but only in time to see his retreating figure, and then she knew, by the turn of his head, that he was brimful of wrath.

As Ruth stands, while "the music" is tuning, and the foot of Philip is beating, and his head curving something after the style of a pawing horse waiting impatiently to be let loose, let us look at her and her costume: Spangles all over—that is, the blue silk is spotted with them, the primp little waist is girdled with them, they sparkle on her shoulders and bare arms, and on her little feet. In those days, it was something to have spangles, spangles were things to be borrowed; but Mrs. Ellis had determined that hers should no longer be lent; since Zelotus Hall's wife had only sent home three-quarters of an ounce after the last great sleighriding ball; and thenceforth, though she did love to be neighborly, yet she was no Estherhazy, to drop sparkles on purpose for other people to gather, and Zelotus's wife must make out for herself. Happily, Ruth had come home, and it would be an understood thing that "she would want them." All the mines of Ophir and Golconda couldn't do more than those spangles—they lighted her brilliant eyes to more fervid light, they deepened the crimson roses on her face, they made her sparkle all over like a Queen of the Gnomes. There were all sorts of dresses there, of course, from

"strawberry calico" to somebody's grandmother's brocade, and plenty of homemade wreaths and feathers. But the only dress in the hall perfect in its taste and suitability to the wearer and the occasion, was waiting for that last dying squeak to expire, and then the twinkling feet would dart, like shooting stars in a summer night, "down the outside."

Crash! came the bass-violin, two fiddles, and a clarinet. There they go! the two most beautiful dancers, the handsomest couple in the hall! away down—so far! Will they get back in season for the next turn? Here they come! down the middle! up again! cast off! six hands round! right and left! again! again! yes, again! and though the line stretched to—well! they are down at last, Philip and Ruth, flushed and breathless, but making believe they are not tired at all. They have their way to work up back through thirty couples. There will be time enough to rest.

While they rest, and loiter, and wait their turn, only moving occasionally as two of the six hands round, a form of grimness and angry reproach is glooming in the doorway. Ruth caught the look of it as she finished a right and left with a most elaborate piece of fine work in a *balancez*. It struck her so suddenly that she paused on the tips of her shining feet, and a ripple of rosy color went all over her. If she felt a sensation of exceeding guiltiness, which it was evidently the intention of the grim shadow she should feel, she was far too much of a little woman to give up more than half a second to such a state of mind. She finished her *balancez*, therefore, with a perfectly composed grace, put out her right twinkler in a third position, put out her under lip like a ripe strawberry, and then, with her two eyes slowly raised to Grim, she calmly—cut him dead. Thus we see the politest social observances have their deepest foundations in the human heart.

Whether Philip saw anything of this is uncertain. His eyes glanced merrily and joyfully about, lighting up all the dark places; he helped all the awkward ones, he touched Timpah Grant into the right place, he chased Josh Hooper into his appropriate column, he got up "Virginia reels" to please some, and "Hull's Victory" for others. When notice was given that supper was ready, which chanced at the time stupid people went to bed, Philip led Ruth down stairs. He whispered, in the long entry, a request that she would dance the next dance with him.

"But I've danced so many now!" said Ruth, bashfully.

"Only two or three, my dear."

"Six, Philip!"

"Well, you will one more; say, before we go in?"

"How you do tease! Well, one."

"You're a—well, never mind." And it was well he stopped talking, when there were so many ears within shot.

There was a table for you! Dozens of cold turkeys and chickens; hundreds of sugared cakes of all kinds, from pound to doughnuts; pies wherever there was space, and pickles of every sort. Then, for the thirsty, there were egg-pop, milk punch, and toddy, as much as heart could desire. And this was no idle parade for the hour, but stood all night long, like an enduring, beneficent fairy, pouring from her bounteous hand to whomsoever hungered or thirsted. If, by daybreak, the frequent libations led to quarrels and stupor, no wonder, and no blame; for not then, as now, was such a thing known as cold water served up as a delicacy; for once, they let the fountains run wine, and behaved as they used to at Versailles when the king gave the orders.

Eyes were brighter and lips were deeper crimson as the crowd floated into the ball-room after supper. Once more Philip claimed Ruth's hand, and led her to the head of the set. He was proud of her sparkling figure and her sparkling eyes; he thought her, by all odds, the handsomest girl in the county; he hated Earl Hyde, and he pretty much made up his mind to bring matters to a crisis in the course of one of these dances. Which one he could not determine; not this one, at all events.

Meanwhile, they are going up and down, about and about, chasseeing across the hall, and forming immense circles. In one of these, stands Ruth Ellis, while sixteen laughing dancers careen wildly around her, making a whirl of light sound and motion enough to craze an unaccustomed brain. Ruth stood self-poised and calm as a clock. A languor settled over her lovely face, and gave softness to her dark eyes. As the circle ceased its gyrations, and it became her own duty to pirouette, as it were, a courteous reply to their active admiration, she caught again the gaze of Earl Hyde, and came, consequently, firmly and squarely down on her spangled feet. Not that she had not seen him looking at her ten, twenty, ay, a hundred times that bewildering night; not that she had not perceived, with the instinct of a wild thing, his frequent and timid reproaches, his sudden turning away, his uneasiness, his rage, his mortification; all this was as plain as

a book. What if he had danced time after time with Delia Andrews? What if he had twice avoided her own hand, as she stretched it gracefully out to turn his in the *moulinette*? The third time, he had grasped it like an iron vice, and his was as cold. Ruth knew she had the reins in her hands, and she let the steed prance and curve. The road was wide, the moon was bright, what matter if he foamed at the bit, or shook his tossing mane? what matter, indeed!

The clear dawn of the November morning was looking in at the hall windows, and laughing at the dim candles that faded and spluttered in their sockets. Ruth stood at the outer door, wrapped in her woollen cardinal and hood, her dark eyes only peeping out under the white fringe, and her bright little feet still keeping time with the dying strains of the musicians above stairs. Earl Hyde, with the reins in his hand, waited to hand her into the chaise into which she had stepped last night, O so smilingly? His blue eyes were dim with vexation and a proud humility, informing his usually cordial face. A very severe opinion of the young lady, and a glow of revengeful feeling together, gave a bitter and sarcastic curve to his mouth; but he stood still, with cold politeness, to fulfil his part of the contract. On the other hand, was Philip, his face beaming with delight; in one of those dances, he had evidently found the chance to say something, and hear something, too, that still rang in his ears. The two men stood still, looked at her, at each other, glowered, and were silent. Ruth waited. Forty more were crowding out; some getting into wagons to ride ten miles, some hurrying by, but many more standing round, curious to watch how Ruth Ellis went home. The brow of Earl Hyde grew darker and harsher; the brow of Philip Fox grew serener, even to smiling. The eyes of Earl Hyde glared at the smiling face. There was a limit to human patience; he turned suddenly to Ruth, without unknitting his stern expression, and said, coldly, in clear tones that all around might hear:—

“Shall I have the pleasure to wait on you home, Miss Ellis?”

It was the established formula. Nothing could be objected to the words. Ruth's eye flashed for one instant, and only for one; her face deepened with angry emotion; then she turned gayly away, saying—

“No, I thank you, Mr. Hyde!” And leaning towards him said, in a lower voice, almost a whisper: “Remember the proverb, ‘Vinegar

never catches flies!’” and before he could answer took the arm of Philip Fox and tripped gayly out to the road.

“Ruth, my dear, look at your feet! you can't walk!”

“I know it, Philip. But you have no horse, you know. You didn't take any lady to the ball!”

“That's true, Ruth; and I can't get a horse, what's more! Never mind; there's more ways than one!”

The next minute, cardinal, hood, and twinkling shoes, with all their blushing, laughing contents, were borne along on the stalwart arm and gathered to the broad breast of Philip.

“It don't tire me, I tell ye, Ruth! and it's handy, too!” said he, as he bore her on tenderly as a child in the arms of its nurse.

That was a pleasant walk, notwithstanding its difficulties. They had time to discuss a great many points before Philip placed Ruth upright at her father's door, and ran off before any body could see him from the windows. The day was fairly broken, and the General's voice could be heard within rousing the men in tones of thunder. Ruth ran up stairs, changed her dress, and was ready at breakfast as fresh and smiling as if she had slept all night.

It had been arranged between the lovers that after breakfast Philip should walk boldly up to the cannon's mouth and ask the General for Ruth.

“Don't you be one bit afraid, Philip. I can work him round!” she had whispered just before he placed her on the stoop.

After breakfast, therefore, and when the active household duties that fell to her share had been quickly and skilfully performed, Ruth strolled leisurely into the sitting-room, where her father sat smoking as usual, and began arranging some late autumn flowers in the deep blue vases on the mantelpiece. She looked as fresh as the flowers, and round her lips there played continually smiles and dimples, as if she was thinking over some of the drollest conceits. But she spoke not. It was not considered proper for young people to speak in those days till they were spoken to. Presently the General said—

“Have a good time last night, Ruth?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Dance a good many times?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Bije Flint's girls there?”

“Yes, sir.”

Another silence. The General glanced at his daughter. She stood at the mantelpiece placing



the flowers carelessly, now on this side, now on that, her eyes wandering restlessly meantime to the window. Her face was covered with a rosy flush, her lips were open, and her whole expression one of watchfulness under a veil of careless ease. Presently she shook her head positively, and then turned away towards the door. The General had been watching her pretty motions through the smoke wreaths, and stopped her from going out.

"Where now, Ruth?"

"To the buttery, sir. Mother's there, turning the cheeses."

"Wait. I want to speak to you, Ruth. Sit down." The General spoke in one of his awfulest tones, and evidently had no objection to frightening the little one, to begin with.

"What's that in the flower-pots?"

"Hardhack and gentian, sir," said Ruth, demurely.

"Hum! What else? and where did they come from?" he said, in a stern tone.

"Only aster and golden rod, sir," answered Ruth, looking a little frightened.

"Only aster! And what d'ye call it? and where d' they come from, I say?" he reiterated in a loud tone, fixing his steel gray eyes fiercely on the trembling and blushing girl before him.

A slight glance at the window, an instant gathering of the red lips into the smallest possible compass, and as instant a relaxing of them into their natural bounteous curve, and Ruth answered, piteously—

"Don't be put out, father!"

"Speak, then!" said the slightly mollified General, whose delight was in the trembling of his victims. He looked, indeed, not unlike a giantio pussy-cat, gray and grim, and holding with his big eyes and paws the smallest, the softest, and tenderest of white mice.

"Well, then, they came from Earl Hyde, I suppose. Left here last night when he came after me."

The General was now ready for an explosion.

"Ruth Ellis! I won't have that fool hanging round here after you! So, see to it. I sha'n't speak but once. I hate the sight of the slim little serpent, and I won't have him creeping and crawling round my house."

Ruth made her eyes very wide and astonished.

"Father, seems to me you aren't willing I should keep company with any body!"

"Not with the son of a Hessian!" said the General, nursing his wrath.

"I'm sure his father's dead long ago, father!" said Ruth.

"Yes, he's dead; but it's in the blood!

Besides that, I won't have any British titles round my house, no way! Shut up! don't defend him. I'll have neither earls nor lords, stars nor garters on the Ellis farm!"

"Why, father," said Ruth, "'twas his mother was an Earl!"

"I don't care for earls nor counties! I tell you I won't have 'em a creeping around the Ellis farm. The wars are over, and the British kicked back where they belong. I don't want none of their spawn here! Ruth, I wouldn't have let you go last night, if I had dreamed of your going with that mean, time-serving Hyde. I thought you'd more taste."

The General's voice had gradually softened. He had fired off his great gun, and given voice to his habitual disdain of the British. The marriage of his daughter to Philip Fox lay very near his heart, and he determined to try for once the effect of persuasion. Women, after all, could be won over by a little seasonable flattery.

"Phil Fox, now, is something of a man! Good stock, too! good blood, and a fine disposition!"

"I'm sure he's as touchy as—as—" and here Ruth glanced at the window.

"Well, Ruth," said the General, impatiently, "what do you torment him for, then? You can't say but what he's a handsome, likely fellow, though; and he'll be well off, and is now; and I wouldn't mind giving you the Dodge farm if—"

"I think he's a great, disagreeable, hateful, ugly thing!" exclaimed Ruth, interrupting her father, for the first time in her life, to his infinite astonishment, "and I can't bear the sight of him!"

A shadow darkened the east window. One spring, and Philip was on the floor, with Ruth Ellis in his arms, stopping her mouth with kisses.

"That's right, my boy!" shouted the General, "she's an abusive jade, and well deserves punishment!"

Ruth had slipped and sidled to the floor. She stood now erect and firm; her face perfectly calm, and her manner serious and almost solemn.

"Father," said she, in a low voice, with her eyes fixed on the floor, "I have committed a great sin—"

"What—what!" said the General.

"I say I have committed a great offence against you."

"Oh!" said the General, drawing his breath again.

"But, father," continued Ruth, "don't judge me too harshly; my temptation was great; you are sometimes pretty hard judging."

"Go along, you yappin thing! What have you done? Some nonsense, I know."

"But, father, I know you will be dreadfully, dreadfully offended, when I tell you! But, father," she said again, and now in a pleading tone, "if I will promise to do everything you want me to—and whether I want to or not—" She looked sideways at Philip, and then imploringly at her father.

"Bless your soul, you gypsy, what are you talking about? You haven't done anything I won't overlook. Now, see, here's Phil Fox. What do you say, Philip? You like her, I know."

Philip was about to speak.

"Let me finish, if you please," said Ruth. "Father, if I give up my own wish and will to please you, and marry the man you choose for me, and—and—don't have a word to say to any earls, nor—"

"Come, out with it!" thundered the General.

"You will forgive me my sin against you!" said Ruth, in a soft, pleading tone, and half kneeling at the warrior's feet.

"Yes, you silly baggage! anything you'll do, I'll forgive; that is, if you mind me now, as you said."

"And you won't reproach me, dear father?"

"No, you nonsense!"

"And you freely and really forgive me!" As Ruth said the last words, she rapidly unfolded a bundle which she had before taken from one of the drawers in the chest, and held up before two pairs of astonished eyes, not the battered and riddled flag of her country, but the sacred buckskins of a revolutionary officer, sacrilegiously and irreparably ruined.

For a minute, Ruth held them up, then dropping them on the floor, she threw herself, laughing, blushing, and crying altogether into the arms of the old General. Then she put out her hand to Philip and kissed his lips.

"You see how I take my punishment, father! I know you'll forgive me!"

## THE TWIN SISTERS.

Frost, B Annie

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# THE TWIN SISTERS.

BY B. ANNIE FROST.

Two young girls sat together in a large, well-furnished room in a boarding-house in Philadelphia. They were the only occupants of the apartment, and, as they sat in the dim twilight of a spring evening, locked fast in each other's arms, low, deep sobs were the only sounds that broke the stillness. Darkness fell, yet still they sat there, weeping bitter tears, each clasping the other fast, as if they were each other's only comfort. At length, raising her head, one of them looked sadly round the dark room, and said, in a low, choking voice—

"Perhaps we had better look over the desk this evening, Gracie."

"Well, we will, if you think best," was the answer.

"Gracie, dear sister, how you shudder and sob! Your hands are like ice, and I cannot comfort you." The speaker's voice trembled, but, softly putting aside her sister, who was clinging to her, the first speaker rose and lighted a lamp, setting it on a little table beside a writing-desk. "Come, Gracie, we must do this together," she said, drawing the table over to the sofa, upon which her sister was still seated.

Grace raised her head, and, as the light struck upon the two, it was difficult to distinguish one sister from the other. In both, there was the same peculiarity of large hazel eyes, dark eyebrows and lashes, with a profusion of light hair, which fell in soft curls around their

faces. Both had regular features, tall, graceful figures, tiny white hands, sweet mouths, the lips being held slightly parted, showing rows of even white teeth; both were fair, and now very, very pale, and the deep mourning garments were alike in each. Yet a close observer would have seen an expression in Ellen which showed firmness and decision of character, while Grace's face told of that winning, gentle disposition which rests so confidently upon a stronger nature.

"Come, Gracie, you have the key; open the desk." And Ellen sat beside her sister again.

While they continue their sad task, I will tell my readers who they are and what their employment was.

Ellen and Grace Neville were twin sisters, the only children of Mr. Grant Neville, a man who had held for years the position of the wealthiest in one of the largest of our Western counties. Speculating in Western lands had been his mania before he was married, but, yielding to the wishes of his gentle little wife, he had lived in Baltimore through her short life. When she died, he had placed his daughters, then seven years old, in a boarding-school in New England, and himself removed to the West. Ten years later saw him the leading man in the flourishing town of Daiesville, living in a large, luxuriously furnished house, with his beautiful daughters, just returned from school, presiding over it—the richest, most popular, and happiest man in Daiesville.

The love for speculation, like that for gambling, grows upon its victim, and Mr. Neville could not rest contented with the bright present already in his grasp, but strove for a future brighter still. Tempted by flattering prospects held out to him, he risked his whole fortune on one of the popular bubbles of the day, and lost all. For months he was like one distracted; then he announced to his children that he was going to Philadelphia, where his friends would aid him; and, selling his house and what small remnant of property was left him, he left his Western home. They had scarcely reached Philadelphia when fatigue, disappointment, and despair brought on an attack of illness, and Mr. Neville, two weeks later, died of brain fever, leaving his children orphans, in a strange city, without one friendly voice to comfort them. One of the boarders in the house where they stayed, moved by their forlorn condition, had superintended the arrangements for the funeral, but he left the day their father was buried.

"Nellie," said Grace, as she opened the desk,

"we will have to support ourselves now. You know father said he had nothing left."

"Well, Gracie, we are not the first who have done so. We will support ourselves."

"But what can we do?"

"We can teach French, music, drawing, and all the branches of an English education; we can sew, knit, and embroider."

"But we have no friends here."

"We must *make* friends, then. We are young and healthy, and surely in this large city we need not starve." Ellen spoke cheerfully, hopefully, though even her brave heart was dismayed at the prospect before them. "We can stay here two weeks longer," she continued, "for father paid a month's board in advance; I have the receipt. In that time we can surely find something to do."

"But we do not even know the names of the streets here," said Grace, again.

"Sister," said Ellen, in a grave, solemn tone, taking Grace's hand in hers, "we are orphans, in the hands of God. He who numbers the hairs of our heads, and who does not suffer a sparrow to die unmarked, will watch over and guard us. Cast your burden upon Him, strive to do His will, to live honestly and uprightly in his sight, and He will take care of us; I am sure of it."

"Oh, Nellie, I will!" And Grace looked up into the fair face, so pure, almost holy, in its look of perfect faith and trust. "I will try not to despond again."

"Here are letters," said Nellie, turning, after a moment's pause, to the desk, "but they are old; put them back. Here is the purse." And she poured its contents upon the table.

"Twenty, forty, sixty, eighty, ninety-five, a hundred—one, three, five, ten! Why, Gracie, here are a hundred and ten dollars, and there were nearly twenty in his pocket-book; this will surely support us until we find something to do. We must find another boarding-house first, because the board here would soon exhaust our stock. There is nothing more here, Gracie; lock the desk."

It was very late that night before the sisters ceased talking, but the next day they started to find work. From a directory they had taken the directions of many schools and seminaries, and all day went from one to another, trying in vain to get a situation. Some were already supplied, some wanted references, which they had not to give; but, on one pretext or another, all declined their services. Worn and discouraged, they returned in the evening. They were entirely dependent upon their own re-

sources; their father was of English birth, and they knew nothing of his relations, and their mother had eloped from her home and held no intercourse with her family. Not a relative could they turn to for one word of advice or one particle of assistance.

"Gracie," said Ellen, in the evening, "I mean to speak to the old lady who sits beside me at table. Her room is just opposite this one, and she has always spoken to us kindly; perhaps she can tell us what to do."

"Mrs. Arnold?"

"Yes. Come! we will go over to her room; I saw her go in, just now."

"Oh, Nellie, I am so tired." And Grace's fair head drooped on the sofa-cushions.

"I will go, then, while you rest." And, kissing her sister, Nellie left the room.

"Come in," was the answer to her timid knock. "Ah, Miss Neville," said an old lady, the only occupant, looking up, as she entered, "I am glad to see you. Come in. How is your sister this evening? Sit down, my dear."

"She is well, but very tired," said Ellen, taking the chair the old lady pointed out. "I have ventured to intrude—"

"No intrusion," said Mrs. Arnold, kindly, taking Ellen's hand; "I am glad you came. I was intending to come to you soon, but I knew that such sorrow as yours has been was better left undisturbed, and you and your sister were each other's best comforters."

The tears sprang to Ellen's eyes at the kind tone and gentle manner of the old lady, but she crushed them back, and, in a low tone, but firm and clear, she told her story, ending with—"We have nothing, and must work. What had we better do?"

"I am afraid it is hopeless to try to get teaching to do," said Mrs. Arnold, after a long pause; "every one likes to know to whom they are trusting their children, and—excuse me, my dear—you are strangers. Could you get a letter from your teacher in Boston?"

"The school is broken up, and I do not know where to address her."

"That is bad, very bad," said the old lady, mutely. "You can sew, you say?"

"O yes, we make all our own clothes."

"Can you make children's dresses?"

"I could if I had a good pattern."

"Well, I think I can get that for the present for one of you. My niece asked me yesterday to find some one for her. Are you willing to try?"

"Willing! Yes, and thank you very much."

"Then for boarding. You are right in think-

ing this is too expensive a place. I know a quiet house, where you can have one pleasant room. It belongs to an old servant of mine, who has been lately left a widow. She has a small store, where she makes collars and caps, and rents one room; it is vacant now, and you will meet no other boarders; so, you see, you can have privacy, and her age will be a protection."

"How kind, how very kind you are!" said Ellen, in a low, broken voice.

"Do unto others as ye would others should do to you," said the old lady, gently. "I have watched you both, my child, and I have heard many a word from you which convinces me that you are good, pious girls. Do not interrupt me. I am an old woman, and my usefulness may not last long; let me catch every chance that Providence throws in my way. You are tired now, and need rest. In the morning, I will take you to my niece, and you can try, at least. Good-night. There! no thanks." And with gentle force she silenced the words of gratitude on Ellen's lips, and, kissing her fondly, bade her good-night.

Grace had fallen fast asleep on the sofa, but Nellie wakened her, to see if good news would not drive away the sad, despairing expression from her fair face.

The next morning, Grace went with Mrs. Arnold to Mrs. Curtis's, her niece, and, with hopeful, cheering words, Nellie left her there, to take another weary round in search of work. She left the schools, and tried in the milliners' and sewing stores, and at night came home with a bundle of plain sewing, for which she had left the value of the materials in money at the store. Grace joined her early in the evening, with a more pleasant face than she had worn since her father died. Mrs. Curtis had been very kind; the work was soon understood, and there was a prospect of more from some friends of the lady.

The fortnight which they were to spend under the same roof with their kind old friend Mrs. Arnold passed quickly. Ellen had work from the store from which her first task came, and their kind friend cheered them both with hopeful words.

When they removed to Mrs. Allan's, the widow of whom Mrs. Arnold had spoken, they found their situation much improved. The crowded fashionable boarding-house at which they had before lived was not a pleasant home for two unprotected girls, and even coming to the public table had been a severe trial. Now, with no one in the house excepting themselves

and the bright, active widow, who, though advanced in years, retained much of the freshness of youth, with a pleasant room, and the privilege of visiting Mrs. Arnold, they found much to congratulate themselves upon.

Weeks passed, and nothing occurred to break the monotony of their lives; then, swift and terrible, came a great affliction. It was on a quiet summer morning, and the sun shone with unclouded splendor into their little room, and awakened Ellen. Her watch told her it was yet early, but, having some work which she was particularly desirous of finishing, she rose softly, and, without waking her sister, dressed herself, and sat down to sew. Her thoughts went back to the days at school, when she was courted and caressed as the heiress of the rich Mr. Neville; and she was contrasting her situation with the present one when Grace's voice called back her wandering thoughts.

"Ellen, where are you?"

"Here, Gracie, by the window."

"What are you doing there, in the middle of the night?"

"In the middle of the night! Open your eyes, lazy girl; it is fully time. I am sewing."

"Sewing? Why, it is pitch dark!"

"Pitch dark! The sun is pouring in here."

And Ellen, half alarmed, went to her sister's side.

"Nellie! Nellie!" cried Grace, in a voice of fearful agony, "I cannot see it! The sun pouring in!" And she bent forward, straining her eyes wide open. "It is dark—dark! Nellie, am I blind?"

"Hush, Grace! hush, darling!" said Ellen, now thoroughly frightened. "Lie down again. I will bathe your eyes, and Mrs. Allan will get us a doctor. It must be only temporary, darling; there is no blindness in the family, I think, or we should have heard father speak of it."

"Nellie, don't go away."

"I am only going to call Mrs. Allan."

Two hours passed in terrible suspense until the doctor came. Ellen had dressed her sister and put the room in order, speaking words of cheerfulness and comfort, though her own heart was sick and faint with apprehension. The doctor made a long, thorough examination, and then left the room, beckoning Ellen to follow him.

"I will come back in a moment, darling," she whispered to Grace, and then went after the doctor. When she returned, her sister was leaning forward in her chair, her lips parted,

her poor sightless eyes staring wide open, straining eagerly to catch Ellen's footfall.

"Well, Nellie, well!" she said, as Ellen drew her into her arms. "Tell me quick! Anything is better than suspense."

"Gracie, darling," said Ellen, softly, caressing her fondly all the while, "it has pleased God to make me useful in this world by being eyes for my sister. May He deal with me," she added, solemnly, "as I fulfil the trust."

"Blind, hopelessly blind!" moaned the stricken girl.

All day did Ellen stay by her sister, breathing words of comfort and trust; but it took many long days and weeks to reconcile her. One great source of grief was the burden she felt she must be to her sister; but, after some failures, she learned to knit without seeing, and Mrs. Allan's customers, touched by the simple story she told as she offered the articles for sale, readily gave orders for more.

Mrs. Curtis, after waiting some days for Grace, called to learn the cause of her absence, and, after expressing her sympathy and regret, engaged Nellie to take her sister's place.

"There!" said Ellen, cheerfully, returning from the door, after showing Mrs. Curtis out, "now I can earn twice as much as before! Mrs. Curtis pays better than the man for whom I have been making shirts, and, with the money for your socks and headresses, we can live like princesses."

"You will have to leave me all day," said Grace, sadly. "There! never mind; I will not add complaints to your burden. Nellie, I will try to be a patient girl."

"Your gentle, patient spirit is my greatest comfort," said Nellie, fondly. "If you murmured and were rebellious under this affliction, it would break my heart to see you."

A regular routine came again. Ellen was absent all day, but passed her evenings chatting with her sister or reading aloud the new books with which Mrs. Curtis kindly kept her supplied. Grace knit all day, and, as she became accustomed to her trial, sang softly over her work, yet listened, listened for Ellen's returning footsteps.

One morning, when Ellen was, as usual, sewing in the nursery, Mrs. Curtis's eldest daughter came in, with a piece of music in her hand and a troubled look upon her face.

"What is the matter, Lizzie?" said her mother, looking up.

"Mr. C—— has not marked the fingering of this music, and there is one passage here I

cannot play. The fingering is all twisted up." And she gave a little, short, dry laugh.

"I wish I could help you," said her mother, "but you know I cannot play."

"Well, I cannot practise it, and Mr. C—— will be as cross as a bear." And Lizzie tossed the music down with a very dissatisfied air.

Ellen took it up and looked carefully over the passage which gave the young lady such trouble. "I think I can show you the fingering of this passage," she said, quietly. Both Mrs. Curtis and her daughter looked surprised. "If you can spare me for a few moments, and let me try it," continued Ellen, speaking to Mrs. Curtis, "I think I can save Miss Lizzie a scolding from her teacher."

"You can go," said Mrs. Curtis, and the two girls left the room together.

The grand piano stood in a recess in the large parlors, and Ellen sat down facing the wall, with her back to the room, and the piece of music before her. After one or two trials, the passage was marked so that Lizzie declared she could easily learn it. "Play something, Miss Neville," she said, as Ellen rose, after finishing her task.

It was a luxury not to be despised to have her hands once more on the keys of a piano, and Ellen resumed her place. Running her fingers up and down once or twice, to accustom them to the long-denied pleasure of making melody, she began to play. Lizzie Curtis held her breath to listen; she had never heard such piano music before. Great skill and execution were there, but, above and beyond that, there was a soul in the music, as it poured from those slender fingers, and, forgetting where she was, forgetting everything but the pleasure before her, Nellie played on. At the end of one difficult march, as the rich chords died away in the air, a murmur of applause and a cry of "Bravo!" made her look round. Mr. and Mrs. Curtis and Lizzie were all behind her; but there was another—a stranger, a gentleman whom she had never seen before. Coloring deeply, she rose, made a bow to all, and went up to the nursery again. Lizzie soon followed her.

"Oh, Miss Neville," said she, "how would you like to teach Lola and me music? Mother thinks she can get you plenty of scholars, and we are to be the first. You can realize more, and have more time for your sister, than by sewing."

"Your mother is very kind," said Nellie, gently.

"It will be splendid! My quarter is up

next week, and then we begin with you. Oh, Miss Neville, is not my Cousin Ronald handsome?"

"Your Cousin Ronald?"

"Yes, he came in while you were playing. He has just returned from Germany, been gone seven years, and he pets me to death. He is about thirty-five, and my cousin, so I make him do just as I please. Ain't he beautiful?"

"I scarcely saw him."

"Well, he is coming to live with us in a few days, so I will let you see him, for he is splendid!"

Brave, cheering news was it for the poor blind girl to hear of her sister's brightening prospects, and that henceforth dinner and supper, as well as breakfast, were to bring Ellen home to her.

"Who was the other gentleman besides Mr. Curtis?" she said, after Ellen for the third time had told her the little scene which resulted so favorably for her.

"It was Dr. Ronald Curtis, a cousin of Lizzie's. He has a good face, Gracie, one of those frank, intelligent faces you would instinctively trust, with large black eyes and a kind, gentle expression—just such a face as would cheer and comfort the worst of his patients."

"Could you see all this in one look, Nellie?"

"Yes, Gracie, for I faced him as I turned. He loves music, too, for his eyes were full of tears after I played the 'March Funèbre' we learned at school."

"What a pity you cannot sing, too!" said Grace.

"No, my poor throat would never let me sing; but you can warble for two, Gracie."

It was not long before Mrs. Curtis's influence and Ellen's own talent gave her a full class, and her life became an easier one. Gracie, too, blessed the chance that gave Nellie time to return to her side at meal-time, and, some days, to stop in for a kiss or bright word as she passed the door on the way from one scholar to another.

Dr. Curtis often happened to be in the room when his cousin took her music lesson, and very frequently he was going the same way that Ellen took, and offered a seat in his carriage to her. The offer was timidly, shyly accepted at first, but the gentlemanly courtesy of the Doctor soon put the young girl at her ease.

It was just a year since Mr. Neville died, and spring was opening bright and warm, when Dr. Curtis invited Ellen to ride with him into the country. She was looking pale, he said, and needed a holiday, and, after a little hesitation,

she consented. They started early in the afternoon, and drove out of the dusty city, and were gone some hours. I cannot tell all they talked about, for many meetings through the winter had made them old friends; but when they drove home again, Dr. Curtis asked leave to call in the evening. He had never visited her; but Ellen readily gave the permission.

It was early in the evening when he crossed the little store and entered the parlor beyond. At the door he paused; a young, fresh voice, full of power and richness, was singing the old hymn—"I would not live away." There was a pathos in the voice, a depth of expression in the singing that made his heart ache with sympathy, and he looked in the direction of the singer. She was seated in a low rocking-chair, her hands crossed over a piece of fine knitting in her lap, and her eyes closed; her head rested on the back of the chair with a languid grace, and, but for the song, the doctor would have thought her asleep. A slight movement of his made her sit up erect.

"Who is there?" she asked, opening her eyes, and straining to see, for months of blindness had not cured that impulse.

"It is I, Dr. Curtis. Do you not know me, Miss Ellen?"

"I am not Ellen," said she, holding out her hand; "I am Grace, Nellie's blind sister. Perhaps she has spoken of me?"

"Often, very often. But I never realized before the resemblance between you."

"Will you find a chair?" said Grace. "Ellen was sent for by one of her pupils, this evening, to play quadrille music for a children's party; but they promised to release her at half past nine; and she commissioned me to make her excuses, and detain you till her return."

Dr. Curtis took a seat very near Grace's, and looked anxiously into her face. The large dark eyes still remained wide open.

"Miss Grace," he said, gently, taking her hand in his, "I am very glad to meet you. Your sister has spoken of you so often that I feel quite like an old friend." And, with his unoccupied hand, he took the lamp from the table, and held it so as to make the light shine full upon Grace's eyes.

"She has not forgotten to mention your kindness to her," said Grace, "and the books and flowers you have sent to comfort my lonely hours were welcome letters of introduction."

Talking kindly and gently always, Dr. Curtis kept his eyes fixed upon the sightless ones before him, chatting of many things calculated

to interest Grace. He was standing bending over the chair, still studying those large eyes, when Ellen returned. A quick movement of his finger to his lip checked the exclamation upon hers, and she advanced quietly to meet him, though her heart beat high with a new hope.

"You must sing for Dr. Curtis, Gracie," she said, after they had chatted for some time; "he is very fond of music, and, as we have no piano, I am powerless."

Grace smiled, and nodded assent. The white lids fell over her eyes, and his examination thus arrested, Dr. Curtis listened to the music. Grace had a wonderfully clear, rich voice, and singing was one of her principal guards against low spirits. Her stock of songs was large, and she sang unweariedly for nearly an hour. Then Dr. Curtis took his leave, and went home with the sweet voice still ringing in his ears.

The next morning, whilst Nellie was absent on her round of teaching, Grace was seated knitting in the little back parlor when she heard a footstep. "Come in, Doctor," she said, gayly. "You cannot deceive me; when I have once heard a footfall, I know it again."

"I called to see how you were, and to bring a few early flowers," said the Doctor, placing a large bouquet in her hand, every flower of which had been selected for its fragrance.

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" And, with a grace peculiarly her own, Grace raised his hand to her lips. "They speak of the country, of beautiful things which I shall never see again!" And she sighed deeply.

"I do not know that," said Dr. Curtis, in a low, hopeful tone; "blindness is not always incurable."

The large eyes strained open, and a look of wild eagerness came into Grace's face as she caught his hand again, and stood up beside him. "Tell me! tell me!" she gasped.

"I will tell you nothing while you tremble in this way," said he, gently, as he laid his other hand upon her shoulder, and with quiet force placed her back in her seat. "There, that is better, though your heart beats like a frightened bird's."

"Oh, you would not say that to disappoint me," said Grace; "you must know something!"

"You are right! I could not be so cruel as to raise hopes of such a nature unless I felt strong hope myself. I looked well, last night, but I want one good examination by daylight before I speak decidedly. Shall it be now?"

"Now, now!" said Grace.

"Then lay your head here on the chair, and



open your eyes. Here, drink this water first. No, you must not faint!"—for Grace's face was pallid from excessive emotion. "My poor child, I do not wish to pain you, but you must be calm, or I can do nothing."

"I am quiet now," said the young girl, after a moment's pause, placing her hand in his; "now look."

Dr. Curtis could not help admiring the self-control with which she remained perfectly motionless under his examination, though he knew the agony of suspense she must suffer. It was not many minutes before he placed his hand over her eyes with a firm but gentle touch.

"Shut them now, Miss Grace, and, Providence permitting, you shall soon open them upon the light."

The tears, restrained till now, burst forth, and Grace tried in vain to speak her gratitude. Dr. Curtis looked up and saw Ellen coming in the store. Nellie stood an instant in the doorway, motionless, while the fiercest pang she had ever suffered shot through her. Her sister weeping with Dr. Curtis' hands fast clasped in hers, and he bending over, speaking in a low, ay! a tender, voice.

"Miss Ellen," said the Doctor, "here is your sister crying because I promise her the terrible misfortune of an operation upon her eyes. I think her silly little heart dreads the pain. I will leave her to you." And, gently disengaging his hands, he bowed gracefully to Ellen and left the room. Ellen, her own momentary jealousy forgotten in her joy, quickly took his place at Grace's side.

"I shall see! I shall see!" sobbed the poor girl, as Ellen embraced her.

"May God bless him!" said Ellen, solemnly.

With Ellen's hand fast clasped in hers, Grace, a few days later, submitted to the operation which was to restore to her the blessing of sight. The bandage was placed over Grace's eyes, the Doctor had taken his leave, and Nellie was alone in the little parlor—alone with the bitterest struggle of her life in her heart.

Until he had seen her sister, Dr. Curtis had, without one word of love passing between them, won the young girl's warmest esteem, and, unconsciously, this had ripened into love. That he had loved her she firmly believed, but now all seemed changed. Bound by no words, he felt a strong interest in Ellen, which, doubtless, would have led him to woo her, had he not seen her sister. Ellen knew that she could now win him—that he stood between her and Grace, admiring both, yet loving, as yet, neither. Their strong resemblance in looks and thought

favored this state of things, and Ellen saw that it rested with herself to win him or let Grace do so.

Should she be the rival of her sister, her own twin sister, who had suffered so much? After long self-communing, Ellen's resolve was taken. If Grace loved Dr. Curtis, she would stand back, leaving him free to choose; if not—Nellie's heart bounded at the alternative. She went up into their bedroom. Grace lay upon the bed, with the bandage over her eyes, asleep. The noise Nellie made in opening the door disturbed, without awakening her, and she moved uneasily, murmuring, "Doctor, come soon again—soon! I shall see! I shall see him!" And then she slept quietly once more. There was no mistaking the tone in which she said "I shall see him," and Ellen's resolve was taken.

Every day, Dr. Curtis called to see his beautiful patient, and lingered, sometimes, whole hours together, talking with her, scarcely knowing which to admire most—her gentle patience, or the intelligence and information her conversation displayed. Carefully Ellen kept away from home at the hour she knew he would call, and in the evenings, which she had made it a point of duty to spend beside her blind sister, she accepted invitations from her pupils, leaving the two she loved best on earth alone together. The old cheerful light was gone from her eyes, and the buoyant spring from her step; her voice was low and subdued, and sometimes bitter sighs took the place of light, gay laughter. But Grace's heart was preoccupied, and she did not notice the slow step or languid voice.

"We may take this off to-day," said Dr. Curtis, touching the bandage on Grace's eyes.

"Wait till Nellie comes," said Grace, arresting his hand. "I want her to be here."

"Hers shall be the first face you see, if you desire it," said the Doctor, in a low, meaning tone.

Grace colored, and there was a little nervous quiver round her mouth, but she did not answer.

Ellen came home at dinner-time, and started on finding Dr. Curtis with her sister.

"My patient would not have this removed till you came," said he, rising to meet her. "Shall I take it off now?"

"Yes," said Grace. "Come close to me, Nellie; I want to see you." In another instant the handkerchief fell into her lap. One quick glance at Nellie, and then her eyes rested on the Doctor's face. "I see! I see!" she cried. "Oh, how can I ever thank you or show my

gratitude?" And she stood up, stretching out both hands to him.

He took them in his own, drew her close to him, saying, in a low, deep tone, "Nothing less than the power to call you all my own can thank me."

Her fair head fell upon his bosom, and he bent over her. Nellie crept away, bitterly conscious that neither of them missed her. The sacrifice was made!

Ten years later, we look in upon a parlor scene, and find there Dr. Curtis, his fair wife, and two lovely children, who inherit their mother's dark eyes and golden hair. Over the piano is bending the counterpart of the fair Mrs. Curtis, teaching one of her little nieces.

Nellie had gone South, as a governess, for five years after her sister's marriage, and then yielded to the urgent invitations of the Doctor and his wife, and came to their home. Her independence she would not sacrifice even to them, and she continued teaching. Many offers of marriage were made to the lovely young musician, after she stepped into society as the sister of Mrs. Curtis, but she declined all. The first love of her youth, put aside as a sin, had taken with it all the fresh hopes such love calls forth. Unhappy she was not, for she was in a cheerful home, with a large circle of loving friends, her time occupied in a pursuit she liked, and her conscience pure and clear. Loved by her young nieces, she gradually let them take the place of her other pupils, to the great delight of both Grace and the Doctor, and Aunt Nellie is a bond of strong love in one of the happiest homes in Philadelphia.

## TO YIELD, OR NOT TO YIELD? THAT IS THE QUESTION.

BY A. B.

Mrs. MORTIMER was one of those old ladies with whom we sometimes meet, a sort of "mother to everybody," whose good sense and kindness of heart make us forget that she is old, but invite our confidence, make her a welcome guest in our family, and whose rebukes we receive as "an excellent oil." This is *what* Mrs. Mortimer was; *who* she was is of no consequence. It will matter little who we are, when we stand at the court of Heaven; but *what* we are will be a question of momentous interest.

Mrs. Mortimer came to spend some days in the family of Mrs. Sabin, a frank-hearted little lady, who had a high idea of her "rights," and no small determination to maintain them. She was an "oldest daughter," had always had "her own way," was long the acknowledged governess of several younger sisters, and it is hardly strange that she had come to have an imperious little will, which never showed its power more than in the question which she often propounded to her husband, to wit: "Do you think it is a wife's duty always to yield?" Indeed, this was asked so often, it was evident that the true sentiment was, "I think a wife ought never to be asked to yield a point upon which her heart is set."

Mrs. Mortimer had been with her but a few days, when, entering her room one morning, after Mr. Sabin had left for his daily duties, she found her young friend weeping. She said nothing, as Mrs. Sabin hastily dried her tears; but, suspecting the cause, she determined to interfere a little in her domestic relations, as few could do without the almost certain prospect of making a bad matter worse. It was but the work of a few moments to draw out her impulsive young friend; and, hoping for sympathy, but hardly thinking she needed counsel, she thus made her grievances known:—

"I want my husband to love me as he once appeared to. Once, his language was full of endearment; but he has grown reserved, and, though he never speaks unkindly, he seldom greets me with a kiss, and every day I want

something which he refuses me. I am sure I try to be a good wife, but I have lost all my influence with him, and my opinion and wishes seem to be of no account. I wonder if all husbands begin to lose their love as soon as they are married?" And a fresh burst of tears concluded the paragraph.

Mrs. Mortimer waited till she became calm, when she asked: "My dear, did you ever ask yourself what were your highest motives for wishing your husband to love you?"

This was a new train of thought.

"Why," said she, hesitating, "everybody wants to be loved."

"Very true," said the old lady, "but for very different reasons. I know one lady who wants her husband and others to love her simply for the happiness flowing from mutual affection; and I know another whose strongest motive—though she is all unconscious of it—is, that he may yield to her wishes in all things, and make it the highest business of his life to gratify all her demands. Need I add that, while the husband of the former has come to think his wife an angel in the flesh, the latter can see little evidence that she is loved at all?"

This brought out Mrs. Sabin's fundamental idea: "And do you think it is a wife's duty always to yield?"

"I will not say whether it is her 'duty,' or her privilege, or her policy, though it may be, in the broadest sense, all. If husband and wife are 'one,' there cannot be opposing powers. That destroys the oneness, and with it the sacredness and happiness of the marriage relation. God has made man the strongest physically; the laws—whether right or wrong—make him the strongest socially and pecuniarily; his sphere gives him the best means of judging of men and motives; and the Bible treats him as the head and ruler of his household. I know that, in this age of 'woman's rights,' the justice of these things is called in question, but I take neither side of the argument; I look at facts as they exist. As a matter of fact, the woman's 'power' is not equal to the man's.

The men believe this is right. I do not know but it is; and though they often abuse their power, it may yet be the lesser of two evils, for I am not quite sure that we should prove ourselves any better able to govern justly and wisely than they. You ask if a wife should always yield. I will only say, as a matter of fact, paradoxical as it may seem, those wives who yield the most implicitly rule the most imperiously. They do so because they bind their husbands' hearts with stronger cords than those which bound Samson—cords of love, which make them anxious to gratify every wish, if proper and possible. This result is not because of the wife's 'submission,' but because it shows a confidence in his judgment, a respect for his character, and a gentleness of soul which no man who is a man can resist. On the other hand, every time the wife sets up her will against his, and shows a determination to worry him into a compliance with her wishes, against his judgment, by teasing, fretting, or otherwise, or yields only because his will and his power are the strongest, she sunders one of those cords, and may, in a little while, crush out all of his affection, with agonies to him worse than death. At least, this is the conclusion to which I have come, after a long life and a sad experience of my own. I have suffered, but by Divine grace I was led to see my error before I had quite made a wreck of all happiness. When I had almost weaned my husband's last yearnings of love, I made him, as I said, by Divine grace—for I could not have done it alone—again the devoted lover; and I enjoyed a second honeymoon, that lasted till I saw his spirit depart, prepared, as he was, for the higher duties of a holier world."

The old lady slowly removed her spectacles, to wipe a tear from her eye, and continued:—

"I will tell you some of my history, though it brings up some bitter memories. But that is nothing, if others can benefit by my experience.

"I am not what I once was, nor is the world what it once was to me. But, oh, the struggle that this change cost me! Yet the victory was worth it all. I was a spoiled child; I did not know it then—few of my friends knew it. It was a severe experience that taught it to me. I had an affectionate disposition, all my wishes were gratified, and I thought they always should be. Self-denial was a lesson I had never thought of learning, and no one knew the strength of my unbroken will, because it was so little resisted. I was poor, but had no idea of the value of money, except to spend for the first thing

my fancy coveted. If a dollar was all I possessed, I would have shared it with a friend for the first gratification that presented; and if my desires were ungratified, it was only because they must be, and that was not self-denial. Thus others were almost as much deceived in me as I was in myself. They thought me wholly unselfish, and little dreamed that I had hid away in my heart a self-will that never slept.

"Thus I lived on, in that sense unknowing and unknown, till Mr. Mortimer offered me his hand. He had lost a wife, not many years before, whom he almost adored, and he promised me the same devotion he had given her. I had known her intimately, and I felt that, if I could be loved as she was, I should be satisfied. He appeared devoted to me, and I became his wife, hoping to fill the place of the last one in his heart. I thought I wanted to restore happiness to his heart, and did not dream how much self had to do with my plans. He had property, and I felt that, in marrying me, he gave me, not only legally, but morally, an equal right to it, and was able to support me genteelly—that is, in a style equal to anybody else. It was the same to me as though I had toiled with him in its acquisition. I forgot the years in which he had struggled and sacrificed his personal comfort, and that his first companion had practised self-denial, in obtaining it. I only considered that money was good for nothing but to spend and enjoy. I believed, though mistakenly, that he could *afford* to grant all my desires; and when I made my wishes known, it was with a tone, if not in the words, of *demand*; and though I accomplished my purpose often by teasing and worrying him till he yielded, contrary to his judgment, I little dreamed how dearly was my victory bought. How could he but despise me, when I gave him every reason to think that I loved his money quite as much as I did him, and claimed greater rights to it than did the lost one whose economy and love helped him earn it? I thought not of these things, but believed he was bound to gratify and love me, whether I showed myself lovely or not.

"If we differed in opinion, I could not believe that his superior experience and knowledge of the world ought to make him the most competent judge; so I never yielded my judgment to his. Yielding in opinion was as unnatural to me as yielding in conduct. My husband saw that I had no respect for his understanding, but considered my own opinion infallible.

"I knew it was necessary for the wife of a

poor man to work ; but thought the wife of one above want had a right to enjoy life according to her station, and that, if I did anything that could be regarded as 'labor,' my husband ought to pay me as much as it would cost to hire it done by menial hands, that I might have something to spend for things he was not willing to furnish me. Thus, to enjoy my opinions—or to maintain them, for I found no enjoyment in the victory—to have my own will, and to accomplish my own ends, I was willing, unconsciously, to cut myself off from my husband's sympathies, and, while claiming to be one with and equal to him, and entitled to a wife's respect and love, I degraded myself in his eyes to the level of a mere mercenary housekeeper, striving to drive the best bargain I could with him, and obtain all the favors, under the claim of 'rights,' that I could from him.

"I saw his love declining, and, in my heart—sometimes in words—I reproached him for it. I thought his love was my due, without any demand upon me for respect to his wishes, confidence in his understanding, or surrender of my will to his. He became melancholy, shunning society, under the plea of business, and rarely greeted me with a kiss or other sign of endearment. At length, he was taken sick. He came home, and lay down upon the sofa, and I asked what was the matter. The mournful answer was : 'I am sick, sad, and weary !' No more was said ; but my heart told me something of the meaning of his words, though I little dreamed that his sickness was more from anguish of spirit than any other cause. I felt that there was a wide gulf between us, but could not believe that I was at all responsible for it, or had power to heal the breach.

"We were mutually unhappy ; and one evening, when he was better, after we had retired, with no kiss of loving words, I was impelled to ask him : 'Do you love me ?' Several times I repeated the question, with no answer, till, at length, he exclaimed, with deep emotion :—

"Oh, *how* I would love you if you would let me ! I could love you with perfect devotion, but you prefer your own will to your husband's love. You despise him, or his judgment would secure some respect ; you love *him* not, or his wishes would have some weight ; you disregard his experience and deny him any authority as the God-appointed head of the household, and all control in domestic affairs, except as he becomes subservient to your imperious will. You degrade your husband to the position of a servant, practically usurp his place, and deny his right to control his own business, and are

fast crushing out the last breath of that deep affection which he longs to lavish upon you.'

"I was disposed to be angry, and put myself upon a defence, for I could not believe I deserved such reproaches ; and my first plea was to ask him the very question which you have put to me, and which has induced me to tell you my sad story : 'Do you think it is a wife's duty always to yield ?'

"'I do not ask you to yield,' said he. 'Stand to your rights, and defend them from that citadel of your will that never surrendered ; but think not to win a husband's love by reproaches ; his caresses by complaints ; or his respect by contempt. You may yet make him a devoted lover, or you have little more to do to leave before him only the prospect of a cold and cheerless life of *duty*, as the mere guardian of one he would enshrine in his inner heart, if he could !'

"I need not tell you, my dear friend, that my pillow was drenched with tears. He said no more, and I might have supposed him sleeping, but for an occasional sigh, such only as a strong man in his agony could give. Nor need I tell you, I trust, that, when I became calm, I made that night a night of solemn review. My pride was humbled ; I began to look at things as they were ; my heart told me his bitter words were too true, and, for the first time in my life, I truly believe, I pronounced judgment against myself. It was all plain—plainer than he had expressed, or than I can express it ; and, in those silent, solemn hours, I resolved, before my Maker, that my will should be subdued, and, right or wrong, with a view to the highest good, my husband's judgment should in all things be mine. But think not that my will, unsubdued for nearly thirty years, was conquered by a mere resolution. Deep, often, were my struggles, and terrible the conflict in my breast. I could but often feel that I was yielding my rights ; but even this was scarcely as hard as cheerfully to yield my desires. But I resolved it should be done, and, bringing my will to make war upon itself, I began the conflict. I made my husband no promises, but he soon saw my efforts and appreciated them. It was strange to see how soon his eye began to light up with hope.

"My change was, at first, mostly the result of mere determination ; but, by degrees, my heart and inclination came to accord with it. My husband's smile was at first with a look of fear that my change would not last ; but, in a little while, he was as happy as he was devoted to me. I *was* changed. The lesson was never

forgotten. He saw that I had conquered myself, and I had no more cause to ask if he loved me, for the accents of endearment were continually upon his tongue. I found that, in yielding all, I had gained all. I had no wish ungratified, for it was his wish to gratify me, and I had learned to limit my wishes to the decisions of his judgment. I had subdued myself, and become the gentle, confiding wife, respecting my husband as I had never done before. Thus we lived, with unalloyed happiness, till he was called away to a better world, where, with his former companion, he waits for me, and where, by Divine grace, I expect ere long to go.

"This is my experience, and it has taught me that the wife who 'rules her husband' cannot respect him, and he cannot love her, except, perhaps, in those rare unions where he has a very weak mind, and she really a very strong one. In such a case, the order of things may be reversed."

Thus the kind old lady closed her story; and Mrs. Sabin, with a tearful eye, like one of old, "kept all her sayings, and pondered them in her heart." Whether the true philosophy of connubial felicity was developed in her history our fair reader will judge.

## UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER.

BY E. A. SANDFORD.

Ah, the cheek and eye will fade!  
 Beauty owns immortal grace.  
 Throned she sits within the soul,  
 There is beauty's dwelling-place!

VANDERHOFF.

CHARLES DENNIS and his sister Harriet were seated in their parlor, before a cheerfully glowing grate. He was engaged in reading "Hiawatha," fresh from the press, to his listening sister. If there was any accomplishment in which Charles especially excelled, it was the art of reading. As his sister sat in rapt attention, listening to those musical numbers, as they flowed from his lips, she almost thought that she heard an echo of the murmuring winds and waterfalls, the deep-toned thunder in the mountains, and the majestically rolling rivers in the valleys of the distant west, while, in fancy, she saw the red man in the wildness of his native home.

He read on and on, regardless of the flight of time, until the clock on the mantle told them that their morning's reading had extended some time into the afternoon. He then put the volume aside, to be resumed at some future time. Seating himself very comfortably on the sofa, he turned to his sister, and, in a playful manner, said—

"What do you think of Miss Saunier, sister, Miss Ada Saunier?"

"I can hardly tell you, brother," said Harriet, "never having thought much about her."

"You are acquainted with her?"

"Partially."

"She told me she was very well acquainted with you—that she was in attendance at Madam Roselle's boarding-school at the time you were there, and roomed with you. I wonder that I have never heard you mention her."

"She was in the boarding-school about a year. You are mistaken, however, as it regards her rooming with me. She occupied a room next mine. As there was a door leading from my room into hers, she may have regarded these rooms as one suite; but this door was always locked, and Madam Roselle kept the key."

"It seems that there was a door between your hearts, which was also locked. Wonder if I could not invent a key which would unloose this barrier, that there might be an interchange of sympathies and affections between you?"

"I will excuse you from this task, dear brother, as I fear it would be a hopeless one."

"Why, Harriet, has Ada ever injured you?"

"I have no knowledge of ever having been injured by her."

"Dear sister, this is not like you to cherish a feeling of ill-will on account of any school-girl disaffection. Do forgive the past, and you and Ada become friends again."

"I am very sorry, Charles, that you think I would cherish a feeling of ill-will towards any one, especially such a person as Ada Saunier. I have none other than the kindest of feelings towards her; but I do not think this is any reason why I should cultivate her acquaintance more than that of the many others to whom I may feel kindly."

"Why do you object to a more familiar acquaintance with her, Hattie?"

"Because I do not think such an acquaintance would be pleasant or profitable, Charles."

"Would it be the reverse?"

"I fear that it might."

"I think you are prejudiced, sister."

"Possibly."

"Will you cultivate her acquaintance, Hattie, just to please me?"

"I will, Charles, if you have a good reason for wishing me to do so."

"I have the best reason in the world, Hattie, if I may be permitted to reason on the subject of a passion which has so lately seized me. You have always had my entire confidence, so I will not withhold it now. I will tell you all—'make a clean breast of it.'"

"I understand all you would say, brother. Have you declared this passion to its fair object?"

"No, sister, I have not confessed it even to my own heart until last evening. I have admired her for a long time—all the season; but last evening I first awoke to the consciousness that my heart was really a captive, and that Ada was the fair victor."

"What new weapon could she have brought into service last evening, to have effected so important a conquest?"

"Oh, the most delightful in the world, and the most skilfully managed! Did you not observe how almost radiantly beautiful she looked? Such a perfect face!

"Those lips are Cupid's graceful bow,  
That smile his suitor's arrow."

"You forget, brother, that I was not present at the party her uncle gave for her last evening."

"Beg pardon, sis. I was hardly conscious of any other presence than that of Ada. She looked so almost divinely beautiful! It would hardly seem idolatry to worship her."

"As you would any other beautiful work of art."

"Dear sister, she is one of the most artless creatures in the universe. I could not but mark the contrast between her and the over-dressed, artificial-looking ladies by whom she was surrounded. Her dress was of a plain gauzy white, fastened at the waist by a girdle of the most delicate blue. She wore very little jewelry. Her hair hung in a profusion of natural ringlets, adorned by a single delicate rose of nature's own manufacture, which looked as though it might have blossomed there. Her complexion could not be fairer, her eyes of a purer blue, or her form more faultlessly developed. Such perfect models of human statuary, of nature's own chiselling, demand the admiration of every true lover of the beautiful, especially when they are draped and adorned with so much simplicity and artlessness."

"May we not be artfully artless, Charles, to speak paradoxically?"

"You will at least give Ada the credit of possessing a good taste, Harriet?"

"She or her aunt has doubtless studied your taste with great success."

"Why do you think so, dear sister?"

"You must think me blind, Charlie, not to have observed their manœuvring. I have said nothing, and thought very little about it, as I supposed her arrows would fall harmlessly at your feet; but it has sometimes afforded me a little amusement, when I have chanced to be present at one of those lifeless parties, where congregate 'men who have nothing to do, and women who have nothing to say,' to watch the game of 'purposes and cross-purposes' so skilfully being played by uncles, aunts, mammas, and 'artless' maidens."

"I really fear my amiable sister is disposed to be censorious to-day; but I will forgive this one offence, as it is by no means characteristic of her. But pray tell me, Hattie, what has put you in this strange humor?"

"I am not aware of entertaining a censorious spirit, Charles. I make it a principle not to speak ill of any one unless necessity demands it. I seldom express my opinions plainly, even to you, when they are unfavorable to an absent party, lest I should form a habit of evil speaking, against which I consider it of the utmost importance that my sex should especially guard."

"The principle is doubtless a very commendable one, sister, but, like everything which is good, it may be carried to excess. Will you, as an especial favor, tell me plainly your opinion of Ada Saunier, as you must surely have formed some opinion in regard to her?"

"I will do anything in my power to favor you, Charles, if you will promise to take my remarks in the spirit in which they are given."

"I promise, Hattie. Proceed."

Charles made this demand more with a view to continue the conversation on this pleasant theme than with a thought that his sister's opinion would essentially vary his own; but Harriet took this favorable opportunity to speak her sentiments plainly.

"I think," said she, "that Ada is a full-blown butterfly of fashion, profoundly ignorant of almost every kind of useful knowledge. You call her beautiful; here I must join issue with you. Young says, and truthfully—

"What's female beauty but an air divine,  
Through which the *mind's* all gentle graces shine?"

You will find upon a more intimate acquaintance



with Ada that the graces of the *mind* are almost, if not altogether, wanting in her; and that beauty of feature which you now so much admire will grow to appear stale and worthless to you. I am convinced, also, that her moral training has been no better than her mental—that she has no rational ideas of life, duty, or moral obligation."

"She is quite young," suggested Charles.

"About twenty," said Harriet.

"Is it possible?" said Charles. "I thought her younger."

"Young ladies of her style usually appear younger than they really are," said Harriet; "but when they fade, dear brother, what a wreck is left, while

'Time has small power  
O'er features the mind moulds.'"

"Indeed," said Charles, "I can hardly conceive how Ada can ever be otherwise than beautiful. But this is a world of change, and we must submit with as good a grace as possible to the ravages of time."

"There is a kind of beauty, brother," said Harriet, "which time seems only to mature and render more spiritual. An intellectual and moral beauty, if I may so speak, need not fear the effects of added years; it will improve by time, so long as its possessor continues to progress in knowledge and goodness."

"This reasoning," said Charles, "is all very well when applied to men; but the ladies were made to be beautiful."

"Yes," said Harriet, "to be beautiful, and intelligent, and useful, and good; but when the first exists alone (if such a thing be possible), it is of so small value that its existence soon fails to be recognized."

"With all deference to your judgment, Hattie," said Charles, "I cannot agree with you in your opinion of Ada. I cannot but hope much of a young lady who possesses so much sprightliness as Miss Saunier. Such an angelic face, too! I do wish you could have seen her last evening. But then, women are not fit judges of their sisters' charms; they can better appreciate man's

'Piercing, steady, intellectual eye,  
And spacious forehead \* \* \*'

than the softer graces of their own sex. But if you will accuse me of blindness, I have only to plead the antiquity of the malady in this especial case. The Romans represent the god Amor as blindfolded, and I have never learned that even the Yankee nation have ever invented a means of removing the bandage from his orbs. What do you say, Hattie?"

"Did you ever read Coleridge's explanation of the *cause* of this malady?" said Harriet. "If you take him as authority, I think you will conclude you have not, in this case, been in the least affected with it. Here is the book. Let us read

#### 'WHY LOVE IS BLIND.'

'I've heard of reasons manifold,  
Why Love must needs be blind;  
But this the best of all I hold—  
His eyes are in his mind.  
What outward form and features are  
He guesses but in part,  
But what within is good and fair  
He sees with the heart.'"

"Very good, Hattie," said Charles. "I once heard a story to the point, related of Captain Hilton. His 'better half' is as noted for her intelligence and kindness as for her want of personal charms. Indeed, she is the homeliest woman in the town where she resides. His comrades were one day talking about some ladies in the town not famous for their beauty, and remarked that their husbands did not seem to be aware of the fact of their being so plain. 'I declare,' said the Captain, 'I do believe if my wife was as homely as those ladies I *should know it!*'"

The conversation was continued, but we have already, perhaps, followed them too far—far enough, at least, to discover the conflicting sentiments and different views of life which this young brother and sister entertained.

Charles Dennis was quite young, having but lately attained his majority, and returned from college, "with his honors fresh upon him." He had enjoyed superior educational advantages, and had zealously improved them. He was of an ardent, impulsive temperament, and many of his ideas of life needed that modifying which time, experience, and careful thought alone can give; but his impulses were generous and kindly, and his moral purity unsullied. He had been reared in a home atmosphere of love, and truth, and cheerfulness, and he knew nothing, comparatively, of any other kind of life. What wonder, then, if his fancy painted the future in rosy colors, and he did not fully realize the present *cause* of his happiness, or understand what would most effectually conduce to its perpetuation? He had cultivated his imagination to a somewhat undue extent. His fancy, therefore, often ruled, when reason only should have held the sway. He delighted in the beautiful, wherever found. While he possessed an artist's eye and a pure and cultivated taste, he loved better to worship in beauty's temple than to coldly criticize that which seemed

to him so near divine. His active imagination was ready to supply all deficiencies in point of beauty or interest in the works of nature or art which claimed his admiration, before his cooler judgment recognized the fact that a lack really existed. In gay social life, in what is popularly termed "society," Charles was but a novice, as this was the first year he had mingled freely in it, and the gay season had but just commenced. He had long promised himself a few months of relaxation before entering upon the pursuits which were to occupy his coming years. Had he known the enervating influence, the fatigue and exhaustion of fashionable pleasures, or follies, he would have instinctively shrunk from the ordeal.

The season wore on. Charles's fancy—we will not say his affections—became more and more captivated by his beau-ideal of female beauty and loveliness, Miss Ada Saunier. To say that he loved her, we will not, but it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that he worshipped her. She was, to him, "beauty's self." How, then, could he but admire, almost adore? Charles had a competence secured to himself. What hindered, then, he thought, that he should take this treasure, this imaginary female divinity to his home and heart? What better security of domestic felicity could he have than that beauty's form and spirit should be the presiding angel of his household? He could not think of discord or unhappiness as connected with such a presence. He secured him a home a little way from the noise, bustle, and heat of the city. It was as lovely a retreat as taste could desire or fancy invent. It corresponded exactly with his ideas of domestic retirement and home enjoyment. Here, surrounded by beauties of nature's own handiwork, he might add the adornments of art, and welcome the society of his chosen friends. He might here pursue, undisturbed, the course of life which he had chosen, and for which he was well qualified—that of an artist and author. Though the voice of fame might never reach him, he thought the enjoyments of home would surely be his. To this lovely retreat he proposed to conduct Ada Saunier as his wife, the chosen companion of his life-journey. Ada's uncle assured her this was an eligible match; her aunt said it was an offer not to be slighted, such a one as seldom occurs more than once in a young lady's life; and Ada, like the very dutiful and dependent niece that she was, was soon persuaded to accept the hand and home of Charles Dennis. Harriet, with her woman's instinctive foresight, felt deeply grieved, but

she carefully concealed her feelings, and cheerfully wished them all the joy that time could bring to young and hopeful hearts. She was soon after married to a talented and promising young clergyman, and removed with him to the field of his labors.

It was the month of roses. The gay season was passed, and Ada was heartily tired, wearied in mind and body. The quiet of this peaceful-looking retreat, therefore, appeared welcome to the bedazzled eyes of this gay city belle, and she was quite animated in her praises of its beauty. She assured her husband it was "quite to her taste," was

"Lovely as a dream of fairy-land,"

and he felt very happy to believe that she would both enjoy and adorn the home which he had provided for her. They were soon fairly established in their new home, and Charles commenced those pursuits which had been the dream of his youth, with high expectations of happiness, if not of great success. For a time they were very happy; but the charm of novelty soon began to wear off, and this quiet life seemed too monotonous to please Ada's fancy. As she possessed no internal sources of enjoyment, she began to grow weary and restless, and sigh for change and excitement. Charles tried in every way to interest her and to remove what he charitably called her home-sickness. He rode with her, walked with her, read, sung, and played with her, invited intelligent and agreeable guests to their home, and tried in every way to make her happy; but it soon became evident, by her manner, that his company was often tiresome. She was incapable of conversing with him intelligently upon subjects which most interested him, or even of appreciating his superior cultivation of mind; and he could not constantly condescend to be trifling or to engage in that "small talk" which was the chief social currency they had interchanged before marriage. Some of his favorite authors, which she had professed to like, but upon whose peculiar merits she had maintained a silence which he interpreted to mean "no words are adequate to their praise," he found to be her aversion.

Often, when reading to her from Shakspeare, Scott, or the poets of our own land—himself so completely absorbed in the subject as hardly to be conscious of his personal identity or whereabouts—or, from Milton, reading those immortal strains which at times thrilled him like music from the heavenly spheres, or again made him almost fancy that he could hear the wailing of lost spirits, and fully believing, too,

that she was with him enjoying a rich intellectual feast, he was suddenly brought to a consciousness of his real state and surroundings by being interrupted by some trifling remark of hers, entirely foreign from the subject of the reading. His own beautiful strains of original poetry met with a like respectful and appreciating hearing, and his pictures received much less attention from her than the Paris plates of fashion.

Charles was of a religious turn of mind. He loved especially to dwell upon those sentiments of poetry, and those gems of thought and religious instruction so beautifully blended in the Psalms of David. He one evening asked Ada if she would do him the favor to read one of them aloud to him. She took the book and looked at the psalm indicated. She thought it lengthy. Looking at her husband with a perplexed air and scornful smile, she asked him if he "mistook her for his grandmother, to suppose she would take any delight in prosing over the Bible?"

Charles turned bitterly away, and walked out into the night. Silently gazing at the thousand shining orbs above him, he read in the great volume of nature what Ada had refused to read to him from the book of Revelation—"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work."

Charles began to feel most bitterly that he was alone—alone with God, and nature, his pencils, and his pen—that his labors must ever be uncheered and unappreciated by her whom he had chosen to be his life-companion. He thought of the happy and profitable hours he had spent with his sister, but this only added to his present feeling of isolation. "Had he even thought," he asked himself, "that his sister was not handsome?"—thought she was never remarkable for personal beauty. Did he now think his wife possessed of real loveliness? Did he even dream of kneeling at the shrine of her beauty?

Oh that he had "tried the spirit" which influenced him before taking that step which may not be retraced, for now he felt the galling of that yoke which bound him to one so unequal! Oh that she had understood the true worth and use of beauty, and not employed it as a snare to fetter her own and another's heart! Oh that young ladies possessed of this, too often, fatal gift would be taught to know that it is worse than valueless unless accompanied by a corresponding beauty of mind!

Charles's high sense of honor, and of right,

would not permit him to dwell upon these thoughts, but he hastily put them aside, as often as they would obtrude themselves, and resolutely, but sadly, he

"Took up his burden of life again."

## "FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT."

BY VIRGINIA DE FORREST.

(See plate.)

"An 1812 soldier, did you say?"

"Yes, and as hale and hearty now in his seventy-fifth year, as he was at New Orleans at the head of his regiment. He is a splendid fellow, and I can promise you a hearty welcome on the strength of your uniform. By the way, put your heart in battle array, for the bright eyes of Agnes Lawrence will surely attack it."

"And who is Agnes Lawrence?"

"The Colonel's grandchild, as fair a cottage girl as lives in America. She is an orphan; the Colonel's housekeeper; face-washer and school-mistress to her little brother and sister, and—?"

"Captivator of my friend George Hamilton's heart," said Norman Grant, laughing.

They were two light-hearted, brave young men who thus chatted, as they took the road to Somerville. The older of the two, Lieutenant George Hamilton, had invited his friend and classmate at West Point, Norman Grant—also Lieutenant in the United States Army—to join him in a ride to Somerville to visit Colonel Lawrence, an old soldier, who had won his title in the war of 1812.

Agnes Lawrence, the grandchild of the old soldier, was, at the time my story opens, in her seventeenth year. She was very beautiful, with wavy brown hair, large blue eyes, and a graceful figure. She had been educated in Boston, and could rank with many a city girl in her accomplishments, while her grandfather's good sense had reared these accomplishments on the basis of a good, solid English education. She had, too, other accomplishments besides languages and music. She could ride from the time her little hands were large enough to grasp a rein, she could shoot a pistol or gun with as firm a hand and unerring an aim as a woodsman, and her housekeeping was the admiration of all the Somerville matrons.

Colonel Lawrence made his idol of this fair girl. He loved Horace and little Mary, the other

children of his dead son, but Agnes was the pride of the old man's heart. If he took the lad to the woods to learn to shoot, he told him the feats his sister had done with a gun at his age, and Horace took all his lessons on horseback with his fearless sister by his side, mounted on a horse that the Colonel had trained to pace, march, charge, and curvet in true military style.

George Hamilton had been charged by his father, when he left his home in Georgia to go to West Point, to call upon Colonel Lawrence who lived at Somerville, some fifty miles from the military school; and after the first call, he became a frequent visitor. He was then but a lad, and Agnes was away at school; but the old campaigning stories, and the animated conversation of the Colonel possessed a charm for the young soldier, and when her mother's death called Agnes home, some six months before the date at which my story opens, the cottage lost no charm for the young man.

To return to the two riders whom we left on the way to Somerville. Chatting pleasantly, they rode on slowly, enjoying the cool afternoon air, till they stopped at the summit of a hill which overlooked the little village. At the foot of the hill was a stream, narrow, but running with that slow motion which shows deep water, and as the young men stopped, their eyes fell upon a young horsewoman who was approaching the bridge which spanned the water. It was but one wide plank, yet the rider rode fearlessly forward, keeping her horse at an easy trot. She wore a black cloth habit, and a small black hat, and the tiny hands were covered with black gauntlets. Her hair was braided in wide braids, touching each cheek, and the rich crimson there showed that she had not long been riding at her present moderate pace. Her horse, a tall white animal, strongly built, looked more like a dragoon's charger than a lady's steed, and he carried his head in a way that betokened

plenty of spirit, yet the little hand that held the reins showed a steady firm grasp that argued well for the rider's ability to manage him.

The middle of the frail bridge was reached, when a loud shout from some boys playing on the bank of the stream startled the horse, and with a quick bound he lost his footing on the plank, and fell into the water. Quick as lightning, George and Norman started down the path to the bank of the stream. The young lady, however, was equal to the emergency. Keeping her horse's head well up, she urged him to swim. He struggled bravely, but the heavy cloth habit, becoming saturated with water, was dragging her down from the saddle, and he made but slow progress. Pale as ashes, evidently expecting to lose her seat, the young girl still kept her presence of mind, and in a clear voice encouraged her horse. "Good Hector! Forward, sir!"

"Drop the reins, and loose your foot from the stirrup!" cried Norman, as he sprang to his feet at the foot of the hill, tossing his reins to George.

Agnes looked up. "He can swim!" she said. "Your habit weighs him down!" again shouted the young man. "Head him this way! No! no! He is swimming with the current! She will sink!" and without waiting for any answer, he sprang into the water.

Agnes felt that she could not keep her seat a moment longer, and as Norman came up beside her she loosed her foot from the stirrup, and let the horse go from her. The heavy skirt dragged her down, but a strong nervous arm was round her waist, and she did not lose her courage.

"So! Don't struggle; I can carry you!"—and with strong strokes Norman went towards the bank. George leaning over, lifted Agnes from Norman's arms, and Hector, released from his burden, now came up and completed the dripping trio.

"Bravely done, Miss Agnes!" was George's greeting, as he received her in his arms.

"Lientenant Hamilton!" said Agnes, with a bright blush. "Thank you! I can stand!"—and she turned to Norman who now stood upon the bank. The smile with which she had greeted George died away, and her eyes filled with tears, as she held out both hands to Norman. "How can I thank you!" she said, with a trembling voice. "I can never, never express my gratitude!"

"Don't try!" said the young man, bowing. "I am only too happy to have been at hand to assist you. Miss Lawrence, I presume, from George's greeting!"

"Let me introduce Lieutenant Grant!" said George. "We were on our way to your house, and I would suggest that the sooner we reach it, the sooner you will be able to doff that dripping habit. Let me assist you!" And leading Hector up, he offered his hand and shoulder for Agnes to mount.

"You are not afraid?" said Norman.

"Afraid! O no. Grandfather says a soldier's grandchild should not know the meaning of the word."

"But," said George, "I shall lead your horse over the bridge. You must not risk another fall." And, taking the bridle, he led Hector to the other side of the stream. Norman followed, and George, returning for his own horse, soon overtook them. A brisk canter brought them to the Colonel's door, and while George went in to give the old gentleman the history of the adventure, Agnes led Norman to one room, and then retired to her own apartment to change her wet clothes.

When they met again in the parlor, Norman in a suit of Colonel Lawrence's black clothes, and Agnes in the deep mourning dress she wore for her mother, neither showed any trace of the adventure. The young girl's cheek was again crimson with excitement, and her eyes flushed, as she greeted her grandfather.

"My dear child!" said the old man, with a quiver in his voice, "my dear Agnes!"

Gently she laid her fresh young cheek against his withered one, understanding fully how the heart that never quailed upon the battle field, now trembled at the thought of her danger.

"It is over!" she whispered. "Thank God for his mercy, and then, dear grandfather, thank these brave men that I do not now lie at the bottom of the Meadow Run."

"Not me!" said George. "I only took Miss Agnes from the water after the danger was over. Give the praise where it is due," and he placed Norman's hand in the Colonel's.

"May the blessing of an old man attend you!" said the Colonel, in a grave tone. "Heaven reward you for what you have done!"

"Tea is ready!" said Horace, breaking in upon the group. "Oh, Mr. Hamilton, have you brought my caps?"

The Colonel insisted upon keeping Norman and George all night at the farm, and it was not until after a hearty breakfast, the next morning, that he allowed them to depart.

The evening passed pleasantly, but the ride home was rather silent, and the conversation constrained. Neither of the young men referred to the adventure of the previous after-

noon, and they spoke but little of the inmates of the farm. It was the last time they went there together; not that the visits made by George were less frequent, nor did Norman slight the Colonel's warm invitation, but, by a tacit agreement, they went separately.

It is an old story, often told, yet ever recurring. They both loved, and each hoped. George saw no change in the cordial greeting Agnes had always given him; and Norman, when he marked the flush of pleasure, and the tremor in the voice of the young girl at his approach, knew that his love was not given in vain.

Months had passed, yet neither of the young men had spoken, when the war with Mexico broke out, and Lieutenants Hamilton and Grant received orders to join their regiments, and be ready to start for the seat of war.

George read his dispatch, and then, laying it aside, he mounted his horse, and took the road to Somerville, determined to win Agnes to promise to be his bride. With such a hope as that, there was no danger he would not face, no deeds of valor he would not dare. It was a long, weary ride, though part of it was done by steamboat, and he rode slowly up the path that led to the Colonel's door. His position upon his horse gave him a view of the little parlor, though the curtain was drawn across the lower part of the window. He gave one glance, then reined in his horse, and sat as if rooted to the spot. One long, long look into the little parlor, and then, turning his horse's head, he dashed down the path at headlong speed. He had seen Agnes, whom he loved, in Norman's arms. She was weeping bitterly, but Norman kissed away the tears, and drew her closely to his heart. George read the whole story. Norman had told his love and his summons to Mexico, and Agnes, returning the love, sorrowed over the parting. The Colonel, grasping the young soldier's hand, gladly promised that Agnes should be the reward of his valor in war. There was a frank, open expression in Norman's face, a generous, noble impulse in his actions, and a noble spirit so manifest in his every expressed thought, that he had won the Colonel's heart, and a father's blessing could not have been warmer than the noble old man bestowed upon the young hero panting to win his laurels.

The time passed slowly at the cottage after the young men left. George wrote a note of farewell to the Colonel, pleading haste as an excuse for the omission of a personal interview. The frequent visits the two lieutenants had paid to the cottage made their absence severely

felt. Agnes missed Norman, as a woman misses the object of her first love, and the Colonel, while he longed for Norman's hearty, cheerful voice, missed no less the frank, manly greeting of his young friend George.

Letters came frequently from Norman to Agnes, and the newspapers kept the family at the cottage perfectly familiar with the movements of the army. Agnes, while her cheek would pale with terror over the lists of killed and wounded, would, that fear once removed by reading the names, read to the old man the accounts of glorious victories, and her fresh young voice would sound like a clarion's music, as the excitement brought out its high, clear tones. Her cheek would flush and her eye sparkle at any deed of valor, and she felt, with Norman on the field, that every soldier was her comrade and brother as well as his.

"I never knew how much I loved him until now," she said, one evening, to her grandfather; "but now, when I feel that he is among the brave men at Mexico, fighting for his country, I not only love him, but I am so proud, so proud that he loves me!"

One afternoon, while Agnes was in her own room, engaged in some domestic duties, and little Mary sat in the dining-room, reading to the Colonel, Horace suddenly burst into the house.

"A paper! There's been another battle at Buena Vista! Come down, Agnes! I want to read it."

Throwing down her work, Agnes hastened to the dining-room; but the impatient boy was already seated before his grandfather, while Mary stood with folded hands to listen when the young girl came in. She stood behind her grandfather's chair, while Horace opened the sheet.

"Here it is! 'Letter from our Own Correspondent.' That's always more jolly than the regular official news, because it has so many details. Now, then!" A long, clear account of a battle too familiar to all Americans to need repetition here followed, then Horace read:—

"We noticed one little incident of American chivalry that interested us exceedingly. One of the Mexican officers, an old man, was thrown from his horse, and three Americans, excited to madness by the fury of the fight, sprang upon him. The sword of one was at his throat, when a young officer, whose name we have not learned, sprang forward, crying, 'Shame! he is an old man. Forward there, boys, where there is *fighting*!' And, striking away the threatening sword, he led the three to the heart

of the battle, leaving the old Mexican to rise unhurt. We regret to add that the gallant soldier fell, covered with wounds, after returning to his post. In the world he has quitted he leaves a name covered with honor, and in his new life that deed of humanity will surely be accounted in his favor."

Other incidents followed, and then suddenly the lad stopped reading. The paper trembled in his hand, and his eyes filled with tears.

"What is it, Horace?" said Agnes, in a choking voice.

"Oh, Aggy, don't read it! O dear!" And the boy broke down in a fit of sobbing.

Agnes, moved by she knew not what terror, took the paper. The letter had a postscript:—

"At the moment of sealing this, we have learned the name of the gallant American officer who saved the old man's life. It was Norman Grant, captain in the —th regiment."

Agnes did not faint, nor scream. She laid the paper on the table, and with slow, heavy but equal steps, she went to her own room. Twice the grandfather went up to listen if she moved, but hearing no sound to break the deathlike stillness, he came down again. All night, the poor girl sat in one position, stunned by the crushing weight of her sorrow. Then, the Christian teachings of her mother, and the brave counsels of her grandfather, came to comfort her. He was dead, but he had died bravely, fighting for his country, covered with honor; and his last act had been one of humanity. As his widow, she would bear herself like a soldier's wife, and love his honor above his life.

Bravely she fulfilled her task. Her grandfather missed no comfort, no loving word or caress; her brother and sister found no difference in her gentle care of them; but the crimson died from her cheek, leaving it blanched, and her step lost its buoyant spring; Hector stood idle in the stable, and the piano in the little parlor was only opened to give Mary her music lessons. Nights of weeping left her face pallid; and the clear, joyous ring in her voice was subdued to a tone of gentle sadness.

Three months after the news of the battle of Buena Vista reached Somerville, Colonel Lawrence died. He was cheerful and conscious through a short, but severe illness, and died, as he had lived, a sincere Christian, a brave and good man.

Agnes had an uncle living in Ohio, and he wrote to her to come to him when the news of his father's death reached him. As the Colonel left no property, Agnes found herself thrown

upon her own exertions for support, and she opened a school at Maysfield, the village where her uncle lived. She had no relatives at Somerville, and, keeping up no correspondence with any one there, she was soon forgotten, in the changes that followed her departure.

Two, three years passed away, and Horace was fifteen years old. His grandfather had wished him sent to West Point, and his uncle procured him an appointment. Agnes saw him go with a heavy heart; West Point was but the preparation for the army, and the poor girl shuddered at the thought of her bright, bold boy sharing her lover's fate.

Horace had been but a few weeks in the academy, when, in company with a number of brother cadets, he received an invitation to join a party at Mrs. L——'s, one of the leaders of fashion at West Point. It was early when he entered the parlors, and there were but few persons present. One gentleman, in the uniform of a colonel, stood chatting with the lovely hostess. Horace fixed his eye upon this man, and advanced toward him slowly, as if fascinated. Slowly, slowly forward, his bright eyes fixed full on the colonel's face, the boy came, till he stood close beside the object of his scrutiny. Then, with a low voice, as if not quite certain, he said:—

"Norman Grant!"

"That 's my name!" said the officer, turning quickly.

"Then you're not dead! Oh, Agnes! sister Agnes!" And the lad burst into tears.

"Horace!" cried Norman, "Horace! Agnes! Where is she? Here, come with me. I may take my friend to the library, may I not, Mrs. L——?"

"Certainly," was the gracious reply.

"Then you were not killed!" said Horace, when they were alone.

"No! a mistake of those stupid reporters! I was desperately wounded, though. See!"—and he tapped an empty sleeve; he had lost his left arm. "Will Agnes take me now, think? Oh, Horace, where is she? I was ill, too ill to write for four months, and when I came home you were gone!"

Explanations followed, and the next day the colonel started for Ohio.

I cannot describe the meeting, but I can assert that the empty sleeve did not make Agnes retract her promise, and, under the influence of happiness, the soldier's bride regained the light step, blooming cheek, and gay voice she had lost from the time she heard the news from "Our Own Correspondent."

## MARY GREY.

BY EMILY B. CARROLL.

We were playmates in childhood, Mary Grey and I, and, as we grew up to womanhood, our friendship grew still stronger, till at last we were almost inseparable. I cannot tell how many foolish promises we made to each other, for we were romantic, innocent young simpletons, and devoted to each other. I know one promise was never to marry, but always to live together in some snug little cottage, where we should be as happy as the day was long; "the world forgetting, by the world forgot." Ah me! I have proved recreant to my promise—as witness my husband and two of the sweetest, rosiest little darlings that ever gladdened a fond mamma's heart; but Mary still lives in "maiden meditation, fancy free."

She was a very pretty girl, sweet Mary Grey, some three or four years my senior, though she did not look it, for she had a very youthful face, and *such* pretty auburn ringlets waving down each side of her rosy cheeks. She was tall and slender, not *thin*, only interesting-looking, and she was so graceful and dignified in her manners. How could she ever have fancied little romping me! Well, "we lived and loved together," as the poet says, till I was seventeen, and Mary nearly twenty-one, when fate came in the shape of an old uncle, and carried her off to New England. She was an orphan, poor girl, having lost both parents before she attained her fourteenth year, and since their death she had been residing with a married sister in Philadelphia. Her uncle was rich and childless, so Mary's sister urged her to go with him, and, after a great deal of weeping, Mary consented. Dear me, how we did cry, and how many keepsakes I made for Mary, and she for me! One of her gifts lies beside me now—a toilet-cushion, elaborately embroidered, and bearing the inscription "Mary to Louisa" on one side, and on the reverse the old, old motto "Forget me not." It was a cold, drizzling, gloomy November day, when Mary and I sobbed our farewells to each other, and with streaming eyes I watched her, as she entered the carriage that was to convey her to the boat. She put her pretty head out of the window, waved her hand to me, and then the

carriage rattled away, and I went up stairs and threw myself on the bed in an agony of weeping, and sobbed as if my very heart would break.

I was a foolish girl, I know, but we had been friends so long, and I did love her so dearly! As far back as I could remember, her dear face looked smilingly out of my joys, or sympathizingly out of my sorrows; she seemed a part of my very self—the better, dearer part. According to promise, we corresponded regularly. Such long, precious letters as she wrote to me! Never did a fond girl prize her lover's letters more than I prized my dear Mary's. She missed me so much, she said, she wanted to see me so badly! Oh, how she did wish that I was with her, to share in her amusements and employments, and increase her happiness! I must come and pay her a visit soon, she said, a good long visit.

I was very anxious to go, and eagerly urged my parents to consent to my going, till at last they told me I might accompany Mary back, when she came to see her sister in the winter, as she expected to do. Wasn't I delighted, and didn't I skip about the house like a wild, glad creature as I was, after I got that promise! What grand times we would have together, Mary and I! What merry sleigh-rides we would have with the New England beaux! what grand parties we would go to! and, better still, what nice confidential chats we would have together! How I enjoyed my visit in imagination! but it was *only* in imagination, for I never went to New England, and I never saw Mary Grey again till last summer, and then she was no more like the Mary Grey I had known and loved so long than day is like night. But I mustn't anticipate.

First of all, Mary's uncle fell sick; then her aunt got the rheumatism, and finally became paralyzed; and one thing after another occurred to prevent Mary from coming, till year after year passed away. I had formed new ties; I had taken another name, and my heart was thrilling with a strange, delightful, yet solemn feeling. I was a mother; a little waxen form lay close to my bosom, soft blue eyes looked lov-



trigly up to mine; tiny lips, like a cleft rosebud, tended to lisp the sweet name "mamma." It was my own, my child, this precious little angel, this priceless gift from heaven! Oh, how fondly I loved it, and how I idolized my husband! but Mary Grey, my girlhood's friend, was not forgotten. I wanted her to share in my joy; I wanted to say, "Here is my husband, and your brother, Mary, sweet sister;" I wanted to lay my baby in her arms, and say, "He is mine, Mary; love him for my sake."

But the poor girl was tied down in her New England home; she had two aged invalids to nurse now, for her aunt and uncle were both afflicted and nearly helpless. How sorry I felt for her, and how gladly would I have shared with her the happier *destiny* that had fallen to my lot! I was again a mother; this time, a dark-eyed little girl lay in my arms, and again in my happiness I longed for Mary. She still wrote to me, and I to her, not so regularly as of old, for we had other duties claiming our attention now, but we wrote to each other often. Mary's aunt was dead, and the physicians said her uncle would soon follow his wife to a better world. Poor Mary! while her path lay 'mid sickness and death, with no fond arms to shield her or support her weary steps, no loving voice to cheer her drooping heart, my cup of happiness was filled almost to overflowing.

At last her uncle died, leaving her all his property, except five thousand dollars which he bequeathed to her sister. Mary Grey was an heiress now, worth thirty thousand dollars, and could go where she pleased, so we looked for her every day to come to Philadelphia. A whole year, however, elapsed before she came, and my youngest darling was running all about. A pretty little, lively, dancing fairy she was and is, bless her dear little heart! and how proud I was of her, and how I wanted to show her to Mary!

I talked about Mary so much that at last Charlie got tired of hearing her name, and began to tease me about her. "Your friend is an old maid, isn't she, Luly?" he asked me, one day.

"An old maid!" I repeated, indignantly. "No, indeed, sir, she is *not* an old maid."

"Why, you told me she was four years older than you, and you're twenty-six, so she must be thirty," he persisted; "and I dare say she is a prim, starched-up old maid, with corkscrew ringlets, a sharp nose, and sharper temper." And then Charlie, the good-for-nothing scamp, just sat and laughed at me.

"Are you not ashamed of yourself, Charlie?" I said, pretty crossly. "Mary is very pretty, and always looked younger than I; and you said only yesterday that I looked as young as I did the day you married me." And I gave a rather complacent glance at the mirror, where my own face looked out at me with round rosy cheeks, smooth dark hair, and laughing eyes. It was not exactly a handsome face, but it was a pleasant-looking face, and certainly a youthful one.

Charlie laughed at me, and said I was growing vain, and I pulled his whiskers for an answer, and then went to thinking very busily about fixing up the house to entertain Mary, and what fine times we should have when she came.

Now, Charlie and I were not rich, and we lived in a wee little cottage out in the country, just a few miles from the city, so Charlie could easily get in to attend to his business every morning, and out again in time for supper every evening. To be sure, we might have made a good deal more show, but we both liked comfort, and spent quite a sum of money on books and papers that might have been used in furnishing a more showy house. We had a good library, a pretty little carriage, and two handsome horses. I had always been more than content with our house, but, now that Mary was an heiress, I was afraid she might think we lived rather common. Our parlor was a large room, neatly papered, and the carpet was very 'handsome, I thought—it had a white ground, with bunches of crimson roses running all over it, and peeping out from clusters of green leaves. Charlie's portrait hung in a recess on one side of the fireplace, and mine in a corresponding recess on the other side. We had pretty transparent shades to the windows, and over them embroidered white curtains that fell in long, graceful folds to the floor; I had embroidered the curtains in my leisure moments, and they were very pretty. The piano and table-covers were my work, too—crimson cloth, braided heavily. I had also knitted tidies for the rocking-chairs, and worked the covers for the piano-stool and two pretty ottomans. A sofa covered with crimson velvet stood between the windows, and just before it stood a round marble table, on which I had placed my prettiest books. I brought down some dainty little ornaments that I generally kept packed away to keep the children from breaking them, for they were as frail as they were costly, and I valued them highly, as they were mostly bridal gifts from dear friends.

Ruby and gold scent-bottles, richly painted china ornaments, and a card-basket of silver, I arranged on the *etagère*, and I brought out a worsted mat for the centre-table, which was a perfect miracle for beauty, the border being formed of the richest flowers, in close imitation of nature. I gathered my apron full of roses of every hue from our garden, and filled every vase about the house. I put flowers everywhere I could find a place for them; Mary's room was fragrant with them. I put snowy curtains to Mary's bed and to the windows, and put a pure white counterpane on the bed, and I carried two little rocking-chairs from my own room to hers, thinking of the nice talks we would have together, seated in them.

O dear, the world is full of disappointments! I looked with no little satisfaction on my handiwork, after I got done; then I went down stairs to plan a nice little dinner. We had chickens and eggs in plenty, and hams of our own curing, plenty of ripe strawberries, and nice new beets and lettuce in the garden; then I had any quantity of preserves in the preserve-closet. There was plenty to cook, but my object was to get up a nice little dinner that would not take too much time to prepare, for my sole help was a little girl not quite fifteen years old. I am fond of housework, and my little Nellie and I managed famously with our housekeeping; but then, you know, we never had to cook for an heiress before, and I had my fears about being able to do quite as well as I wished. However, no one can tell what wonders they can accomplish till they make the trial.

Charlie was to bring Mary out at twelve o'clock, and we were to have dinner about one o'clock. At eleven, I sent Nellie up stairs to fix herself up in her best clothes, and then I went to work to wash and dress the children. Little Charlie was in high glee, and danced about so I could hardly get his clothes on. I began to get nervous and impatient, for the morning was going fast; and I was compelled to give him a right smart slap before I could get him to stand still. Then he took to crying, which made matters worse, for I was afraid he would have a red nose and red eyes by the time that Mary came, so I had to quiet him with a cake. He looked very pretty, in his little white paddies and the little embroidered blue merino sack, showing his fat neck and round, dimpled arms. He is a fine-looking little fellow, and very much like his father.

Florrie, too, looked very lovely, in her little white dress and coral armlets and necklace,

her golden hair curling in little short ringlets all over her head, and her cheeks the color of a May rose. They were very pretty children, if they were mine, and I felt very certain that Mary would love them dearly. I had got dinner almost ready when I heard the carriage drive up, and then I snatched up Florrie and ran eagerly to meet Mary—but was that Mary? that thin, tall, pale, sallow lady, that looked as if she had certainly “swallowed a poker,” to use a common and expressive phrase, so very straight and stiff did she appear?

It was Mary, beyond a doubt, for she kissed me quite warily, and said that I had changed very little since she saw me last. I took her into the parlor, seated her in a large rocking-chair, took off her bonnet and scarf, and gave her a fan, wondering all the time if I was awake or dreaming. She was dressed very elegantly, but not becomingly. She wore a superb light silk dress, with very expensive collar and undersleeves, and a profusion of costly jewelry, but she looked old and homely. She was very sallow and thin, and her hair looked a real, downright red. She still wore it in long ringlets, which made her face look longer and thinner than it really was, and her dress being a striped silk made her look almost a giantess. She had lost several of her front teeth, and, in short, looked like anything but the pretty, delicate-looking Mary Grey I had known and loved so long.

“Is this your child, Louisa?” she asked, pointing to Florrie.

I said “Yes,” and listened eagerly for the exclamations of admiration I had been so accustomed to hear from strangers. Every one that had seen my child had spoken of her exceeding loveliness, but Mary only glanced at her carelessly, and said: “Are you not dreadfully plagued with your children, Louisa? or are you fond of them?”

“Passionately!” I cried, as I caught my darling up in my arms, and fondly kissed her rosy mouth. “I never weary of my children.”

“It is very fortunate for you that you are fond of children,” she replied; “I do not like them. I know very little about them, never having lived much with them.”

“Perhaps you would like them better if you lived with them,” I replied; but my heart was sinking in my bosom. Not love children! How then could we ever get along together, when I almost idolized my little ones, and Charlie was almost as fond of them as I was? I was afraid she would grow very weary of us, when she saw how foolish we were; and just then Char-

lie came in, and, taking Florrie from me, began to relate to Mary some of her little sayings and doings; then little Charlie came dancing in, and began to ride around the room on his father's cane, making quite a noise. I tried my best to check him, but he was so full of glee that I could not make him keep quiet, so I left my husband and friend to entertain each other, and went out in the kitchen to see about dinner, taking little Charlie along with me. I sent Nellie off with him, to draw him in the garden in his little carriage, and then went to work. I soon had my dinner ready, and my table nicely set. I placed a vase of beautiful flowers in the centre of the table, and my dinner made quite a respectable show. We had chickens fried with cream gravy, a dish of ham and eggs, and potatoes, beets, and lettuce from our garden. On the sideboard sat a large cut glass bowl heaped with luscious strawberries, and around were ranged golden custards, dishes of marmalade and preserves, baskets of cake, and cheese, etc.

Our little Nellie was obliged to keep the children in order, so I had to wait on the table; however, it all passed off very well, and Mary seemed to enjoy her dinner very much. She looked a little out of place at our table, in her handsome silk dress, and formed quite a contrast to me in a pink chintz dress and black silk apron, with no ornament but the little breastpin that fastened my collar, except a few rosebuds I had twined in my hair. After dinner, I took her up to her room to renovate her toilet, if she wished to do so, and then went down to give the children their dinner. Mary soon came down, and said she would stay with me till I was ready to go in the parlor; so I gave her a seat by the window, which was almost overgrown with climbing roses and sweet-brier. She admired the place very much, and evidently tried to make herself agreeable. But I could not feel towards her as I had once felt; she did not seem like *my* Mary Grey.

While I was putting some things in the presser closet, little Florrie slipped down from her chair, and the first thing I knew she had both of her little sticky hands on Mary's elegant dress. Poor little thing! she was not accustomed to seeing silk dresses. To be sure, I have a silk dress, but then I only wear it on great occasions. Mary uttered an exclamation of dismay, and I felt so badly I could have taken a good, hearty cry. However, we wiped it as well as we could, and Mary said she had something at home she thought would take out the grease, and if it didn't she would put

a new breadth in, as she fortunately had enough to do it. During the trouble, we had missed little Charlie, and when we went in the parlor I found him seated on the floor with one of my Bohemian glass scent-bottles, and one of my handsomest books. The cologne he had poured all over himself, and the book was pretty well saturated with it. When he saw me coming, he jumped up in dismay, and away went the scent-bottle, breaking into a dozen pieces. The child was so frightened I did not punish him, but I took him out to Nellie, and told her she must keep him till his father came home at night.

Florrie soon fell asleep, and then I took my sewing and seated myself to have a chat with Mary. I sympathized with her for having been compelled to lead such a dreary life for so many years; but, to my great surprise, she told me that she had enjoyed herself very much. She said they very often had company in the evenings, and her uncle and aunt were such pleasant old people it was a pleasure to her to wait on them. "Besides," she said, "I am well repaid for all my trouble; I am rich, my own mistress, and just about the right age to marry, if I should find any one to suit me."

I could not help wondering where she would meet with any man to fancy her, faded as she was, and so prim and old maidish. She talked principally about her money, and what she intended doing with it. She was going to buy a large house in a fashionable part of the city, have it handsomely furnished, and live in considerable style; her sister and brother-in-law, with their two daughters, were to live with her and bear part of the expenses. Her nieces were grown up, and ready to come out, and she thought they would all have a great deal of enjoyment. She intended to have as much happiness as her money could get for her.

I thought to myself that her pretty, blooming nieces would make her look still older; but, of course, I didn't say so. I asked her if she played on the piano now, and if she would play a few tunes for me. She took her seat on the piano-stool and played for some time, and very well; but she sang horribly, and unfortunately she thought she sang well. In the evening, Charles brought us out some new games he had purchased in the city, and we amused ourselves with them until bedtime.

Mary remained with us three weeks, and during that time I exerted myself to the utmost to entertain her, and Charles did wonders. He made purchases for her in the city, carried notes to and from her sister, brought out bun-

dles for her, drove her all around the country in the carriage, rode on horseback with her, played backgammon, checkers, and various other games with her, and, in short, made himself her obedient slave. I waited on her constantly, cooked up little dainties for her, sewed for her at her polite request, embroidered a pair of undersleeves and a collar for her, and tired myself out waiting on her.

She never did the most trifling bit of work while she staid, and she required so much attention I must say that I was glad to see her go. She thanked us very politely for our hospitality when she left us, and even condescended to kiss the children, and told them she would send them something very pretty when she got home. In the evening, Charlie brought out a note and a bundle from her. The note ran thus :—

“DEAR LOUISA : Please gratify me by accepting the accompanying presents as a slight return for your hospitality. I could not rest easy till I had endeavored in some slight measure to repay you for your kind attention to me. I have been very busy, to-day, selecting carpets and curtains for my new home. They cost an immense sum of money, but they are superb. You must come and spend a day or two with me when I get fixed. Excuse brevity, for I am very weary. Yours, M. G.”

I opened the bundle eagerly, with the expectation of seeing something very handsome. The first object that met my disappointed gaze was a cotton velvet smoking-cap, for Charlie ; then came a set of common embroidered muslins for me, and a cheap ink-stand, gaudily painted ; some low-priced toys for the children completed the list of presents, and the whole bundle might have cost about a dollar. I looked at them in such dismay that Charlie laughed at me till I thought he would never stop, and I did not know whether to laugh or cry. I felt so sad about Mary having altered so it seemed as though *my* Mary Grey had ceased to exist altogether. This prim, stiff, old-looking Mary Grey was not the sweet, gentle Mary Grey of my school-days, not the dear friend from whom I had parted with so many tears, years ago. This Mary Grey might be a good enough sort of a person, but she was nothing to me.

When Charlie found out that I was crying, he came to me and petted me into a good humor, then he put the smoking-cap on the dog and made him stand up in the corner, which

set Nellie and the children to laughing so heartily that I could not help joining them. I gave Nellie the collar and undersleeves that Mary had sent, and gave the toys to the children, but the ink-stand is in my bureau drawer, and the cap hangs in the closet in our bedroom. We keep them there to remind us of the vanity of human expectations. “*Sic transit gloria mundi*,” they speak in a language audible enough to Charlie’s ears and mine.

Mary is living in an elegantly furnished house, and keeps up a continual round of gayety, and I have lately heard from good authority that she will shortly be married to a rich widower, the father of four small children. I should like very much to know how Mary will manage to get along with so many children. I cannot but hope that this marriage will change her for the better in some respects, and that she may be a happy wife, for, after all, notwithstanding her stiffness and formality, there is a great deal to respect in my old friend Mary Grey.

## JESSIE TURNER'S FORTUNES.

BY METTA VICTORIA VICTOR.

(Concluded from page 32.)

### CHAPTER V.

AFTER a short stay at the hotel, the travelling party went on board the boat. Jessie secured a sofa in the ladies' cabin, and reclined there, feeling both weary and lonely. The murmur of voices, the fretting of children, and soothing of nurses, the shouting of people on the landing, and all the various sounds which reached her ear, had for her no meaning, as she lay there busied in sorrowful speculation.

It was some time before the boat was on its way; and, though she had not been upon the water since she was quite a child, she felt no curiosity to observe what was going on. Her friends came to her, and desired her, if she felt well enough, to go with them to the upper deck, and observe the beauty of the time and place. She went. The sun was setting in fiery splendor beneath the distant waves, the bay glowed purple and crimson in the rich light, and the spires of the receding city glittered against a roseate sky. After tea, she again stole out upon deck, and, leaning over the railing, watched the waves which were dashed to pieces against the wheel of the steamer. The harsh creaking of the rudder-chains corresponded with the dreariness of her mood, and she mused that her hopes were like those waves, stealing placidly along until suddenly broken and dissolved to mist upon the cruel wheel of fortune. As she heard the merry laughter of gay groups, she felt her loneliness afresh, and tears, wild, burning tears, fell fast and silent into the deep, mingling their briny bitterness with its heedless waters. Yet, even in that hour, a "still, small voice" kept whispering to her heart that Christianity was an active, not a passive, living thing, to be brought forward to a trial of its strength in a combat with such feelings as now possessed her. That God whom she had worshipped with the faith and simplicity of a child was to become her friend and father, her guide and shield. Meekness and patience were to be practised, and not theorized upon. An earnest inward spirit of prayer took the place of that wild passion of sorrow which had shaken her soul. She became calm; the stars shone with smiles into her face; she seemed to hear her mother speaking down the depths of sparkling

ether, saying: "Be comforted, my child, be comforted." Strains of gay music broke upon her reverie, and when her escort came to warn her in out of the night air, people were dancing in the cabin. There was a great deal of gayety amid the company; the music was excellent, and the dancers numerous. She ensconced herself in an arm-chair in a corner, and looked on with interest. Many glances were cast at the young traveller; the slender elegance of her form, the beauty of her face, tempted many to wish that she would join in their amusements; but the air of sorrow upon those delicate features, and the deep mourning in which she was attired, prevented any from seeking an introduction.

There was one among the company whom she had not chanced to see, who at first was dancing, but who went and sat on a sofa near, where he could regard her attentively.

Presently, he approached, and addressed her: "Miss Turner, do you remember me? I am sure I cannot be mistaken in thinking that I have met you before."

She knew the voice before she saw the face; it went to her heart like a beam of sunshine; and, by the sweet blush which broke over her countenance, he saw that he was not forgotten. It was Mr. Carolyn, the stranger of the inn. He took a seat by her side, and inquired after her mother. A startled look answered him, even before she spoke, whisperingly: "She is dead."

He saw at once that the subject would not bear touching upon, although he felt a deep interest in hearing the fate of the family, whose peculiar circumstances he had never forgotten. He began to talk of commonplace things, and when dishes of strawberries and ices were brought in for the party who had ordered them, he arose and procured a saucer for his companion and himself. She accepted the fruit, but, as she looked upon its glowing ripeness, she remembered that a mother had expressed a wish for some but a few days before her death—a wish which could not be gratified. In vain she tried to taste them; there was a rushing of tears which it required all her efforts to keep back.

"These berries are very fine; they came

down from Cincinnati to-day," said Mr. Carolyn, "Cincinnati, with its vine-clad hills and its strawberries! It ought to have a touch of romance, ought it not? Yet there is no time for romance in the busy West. When its people have at last found leisure for it, their prairies and hunting-grounds, their ancient ruins, their wild flowers, and deer, and thousands of beautiful birds will be obliterated, exterminated, have lost their peculiar charm; so that we shall still be compelled to seek the Old World for objects whereon to lavish sentiment and poetical association. Do you not eat strawberries?"

"I was thinking of my mother," said Jessie, in a quivering voice.

"There is no consolation for a loss like this you have suffered," answered her companion, in a sad and yet soothing tone; "no earthly consolation, I mean. I know what it is; I lost my mother only about a year before I first met you. She did that in her death which years of her beautiful life could not effect"—Jessie looked at him inquiringly—"she broke the stubbornness of a proud spirit," he continued. "I was a wild youth in some respects, haughty, not always considerate, and I gave my mother much pain. You could never experience the feelings of remorse which tortured me as I looked upon her dead face, which could never smile its forgiveness when, too late, I entreated it."

He bowed his head upon his hand. Jessie looked at him sympathizingly, inwardly pondering that one so amiable could never have done anything very wrong. She wished to console him, but knew not what to say. A merry, musical voice calling for Mr. Carolyn aroused him; with a bow to Jessie, he rejoined his party, and dancing was soon resumed. She sat and watched him. He was besieged with attentions, and evidently a great favorite. His winning smile beamed out ever and anon like a sunbeam. His assiduities seemed most particularly bestowed upon a fairylike young creature, whose petite figure and sweet voice made her pretty, caressing ways irresistible. Jessie watched her with admiration, and yet with a vague sense of pain. Wherefore? It may be that it was because she could not mistake the air of tenderness with which Mr. Carolyn constantly attended her, patient and fond, despite her innocent caprices. If this were the true reason, she did not herself know it. Jessie was not one of those romantic maidens always fancying themselves in love with a pair of dark eyes and a silken moustache. She had thought but little about love indeed, and what thoughts she had

on the subject were pure and earnest, kept hidden away in the holiest part of her nature, guarded with equal modesty and earnestness. She may have fallen in love with this stranger, appealing as he did to her tastes and spiritual perceptions, but, if she had, nothing could have forced her to confess it, even to her own heart, when he had given her no signs of preference. She fancied that the pain she felt in seeing his admiration of another was owing to a sense of her own deficiencies, as contrasted with the polished manner, the fashionable dress, the pretty little ornaments of style possessed by the petite beauty. Innocent child! she did not know that the ethereal play of her own beautiful features, and the expression of angelic purity which they wore, lent them a charm as deep as rare. It is true that once or twice Lewis Carolyn turned towards her with a thrilling look, as if silently inquiring, "are we not friends?" but he did not again approach her; and, as her head ached from the various excitements of the day, she soon withdrew to her state-room, and, having first read from her little Bible, she went to bed and to sleep. About two o'clock, she awoke, and, try as she would, she could not again sleep. She was feverish, and wild imaginations haunted her. She would fancy that some one was breaking into her state-room, and then the sound would resolve itself into the creaking of the machinery. Once she arose and dressed herself, and lay down again in her clothes. At last, her uneasiness concentrated itself upon the one idea of fire. "What if the boat should take fire! What if the boat should take fire?" she kept asking herself. Every time her weary eyelids closed they would spring wide open at the officious thought. Presently, she was sure there were some noises not accounted for beneath her room floor, and a change in the motion of the boat, a tramping and hissing, a roaring and crackling, with some "curses, not loud but deep," and a subdued shout—"Better wake the passengers; she's a goner!" In three seconds, Jessie was running about the deserted cabin, rapping at doors, and crying "Fire! fire!" at the top of her clear voice. As the dread import of her cry reached the ears of the slumberers, they came pouring out into the cabin, and the confusion was terrible. At this time, the captain appeared among them, commanding silence in a voice of thunder. There was a deathlike hush.

"The fire is not yet beyond our control; we are doing all we can to subdue it."

"God grant you may succeed," said a calm

voice. "Can we do anything to help, captain?"

"Nothing, except to retain your self-possession. Keep this door closed; the fire is in the forward part of the boat. Let none leave the cabin this way. We are but half a mile from shore, and I think we shall reach it. Let none throw themselves into the water until they are driven to it, as the water may soon be shallower, and the wheels will not draw them down if they wait until the boat stops."

He went out. The passengers stared in each other's faces; wives clung to their husbands; mothers clasped their children; those who had them inflated their life-preservers. The men were tearing off the state-room doors. At this moment, a voice was heard in prayer. It was that of Lewis Carolyn, briefly imploring the mercy of God in a few intense words that seemed to bear up with them the whole anguish pent in those helpless breasts. His "amen" was responded to in a sweet, ringing voice, so clear and trusting in its sound that it seemed to promise safety, like the voice of an angel. The young man could not but look to see who it was who had thus responded. It was Jessie; she stood by herself, white as a lily, but not trembling. The momentary silence was broken; the roaring and crackling of flames were heard; groans, shrieks, and even curses broke from one and another, and there was a great rush to the stern of the boat as fire and smoke began to break through the opposite end of the cabin. At the same time, the boat struck upon a sand-bar and ceased to move; but, thanks to a most merciful Providence, the water was shallow and the land near. At this awful instant, Mr. Carolyn approached Jessie; the merry young creature of a few hours before was clinging in helpless terror to his breast. "Have you no protector here?"

"I have some acquaintances, but they have forgotten me, and they could do nothing for me if they had not."

He seized her arm, for the flames had actually broken into the cabin. Bearing her and his other companion through a state-room, out upon the deck, nearer the flames, but where they would not be crushed by the crowd, he fastened a life-preserver about Jessie, and inflated it. "There is hope," he said, "for, see, we almost touch the land. I am a good swimmer, and am going ashore with my sister. Do you stay here, mind, *here*, so that I will know where to find you, and if the flames reach you before I return, drop yourself into the lake; do not be afraid, you will float safely." So

saying, he grasped his sister under his left arm, and, leaping into the water, struck out for the shore.

"His sister!" Even in that fearful moment the young girl was conscious of a feeling of relief as she heard the words. Hundreds were now in the water, and all who could swim were safe; the life-boat, too, was in order, and taking off the women and children. Jessie grasped the slight pillar by which she stood, and watched the course of her promised protector, as he buffeted the waves with his precious burden. She was sure she saw him reach the shore; and then she could see no more, for the heat was scorching and the smoke stifling her. She looked down into the cool but insidious waves, and, with one prayer for Percy and one thought of her mother, as a column of fire shot over her head, she sprang into the lake. Although chilled, and for a moment suffocated, she soon felt a sense of comparative security; she thought of death with resignation, since she was free from the touch of those horrible flames. Though she did not sink, her situation was critical, as the water dashed over her so often that she could hardly regain her breath, and its chilliness was benumbing her weak frame. Soon she could struggle no more; a mountain of lead seemed pressing upon her chest, then the mountain melted away, and she floated on a sea of mist. When she opened her eyes, she found herself lying upon the wet beach, her head in the lap of Nettie Carolyn, who was chafing her hands and temples.

"My brother left you in my care," said Nettie; "he has gone back to pick up a woman and her baby, whom he saw clinging to a chair in the water. Oh, I do wish that he would not venture again! he will be drowned!"

"Heaven will take care of him," replied Jessie, trying to sit up. "He saved my life, did he not?"

"Lie still, darling; I can hold you as well as not. I guess he did not get back to you any too soon. Dear, dear, what has become of Lewis?"

"There he is, just dragging that woman to shore. See! he has handed her to the people, and is returning."

"Lewis," screamed his sister, "dear Lewis, come to me—do!" He stepped back from the water and hastened to her side. "Oh, Lewis, please do not venture any more! You know you are not strong, and cannot endure so much."

"I'm not wearied out yet, and we must do, you know, as we would be done by. I may save another life," he said, his dark eyes kin-

ding, as he turned hastily away, and struck out once more for the burning ship.

The young girls, with their pale faces turned towards the lake, watched him and the whole scene anxiously. The large steamer, now one blaze of fire, lighting the crimsoned waves for miles around, the darkness stretching away beyond, the flitting boats, the groups sitting, standing, and lying forlornly upon the shore, their wet garments, unhappy faces, and dishevelled hair strongly revealed in the red glare, were wild and awful in the extreme.

"Oh, it is terrible!" murmured Nettie, shuddering and shutting her eyes, as the shrieks of the poor mother her brother had brought ashore reached their ears. The child she had clasped so closely through all her own danger was dead in her arms. "How cold you are, darling! you are almost perished!"

"I am chilly," replied her companion, faintly, "but that is nothing. You are all in a shiver, too. O dear! those poor people who have lost their friends—that poor mother!"

"I shiver because I am so excited. What a dreadful time! Ah, I pray there is no one yet in that sea of fire!"

While the two girls sat there trembling and clinging to each other's hands, Jessie's acquaintance came up in search of her. They were mutually rejoiced to hear of each other's safety. The lady had come comfortable in a life-boat.

"There were some cloaks and shawls thrown in; I will bring one for you, poor things!" said the gentleman. He brought a large cloak and wrapped about the two, at whose feet now reclined Mr. Carolyn, quite exhausted, since the work was all done.

Day broke upon them in their miserable plight. There were no dwellings very near this dismal beach, but the captain had started on foot with a party to obtain wagons at the first farm-houses, in which to convey the female portion of the sufferers to the nearest village.

"This wet and soiled dressing-gown will be a fine thing to journey to New York in," said Miss Carolyn, with a melancholy smile. "How came you to be all dressed, little—what shall I call you?"

"Call me Jessie Turner."

"And call me Nettie Carolyn, and call *him* my brother Lewis. We ought to be friends after passing *such* a night together."

"I ought to be a friend," answered Jessie, turning the soft lustre of her grateful eyes upon her preserver, and then up to the pretty young face bent over her.

"You did not tell us how you came to be

dressed. You must have had great self-possession to even arrange your collar."

"Well, the truth is, I had an *impression*, as the spiritualists say, a presentiment, and it was so strong that I arose and dressed myself, and waited for the catastrophe."

"Then it was you who aroused us from our slumbers?"

"Yes, it was I. I heard the tumult some time before the captain gave the alarm."

"Then, perhaps you saved our lives, as well as your own. Officers are too apt to wait until the last extremity."

"It was God who saved us all," said Jessie, solemnly.

Wagons were soon upon the beach. That fair June morning shone upon a great many dejected faces, as well as upon some wretched ones. As usual, the emigrants had suffered most severely. Several were drowned, though it was hoped that none had perished in the flames. Their little means had been consumed, and they stood in miserable groups, foreign and friendless.

Mr. Carolyn walked behind a wagon containing the young ladies, and they went slowly on over a rough track four or five miles to a little village, whose inhabitants were all pouring forth to meet them. Some of the ladies were glad of the protection afforded by the cloaks and blankets brought out to them. A pale, chilly, weary set they were, when they were lifted out and set down before the only hotel. Doors were thrown open all about, fires kindled, and coffee made, until all were in a fair way to be comfortable. As for Nettie and Jessie, they had a small bed-room in the hotel and some night-dresses furnished them. They were glad to creep into bed, and wait for their coffee; after that, they slept until dinner.

"Dear me, what a dilemma for my fastidious self to be in!" exclaimed Miss Carolyn, as they arose, quite refreshed, about two o'clock. "Only this scant night-robe in which to appear before the eyes of my brother!"

"And what shall I do?" queried Jessie.

"Oh, here is your dress, dried and pressed, and as good as ever. You are very fortunate, Miss Turner."

"Somebody has been very kind, that is evident. My collar has been done up and my cuffs crimped, so that I am quite passable. Some godmother has provided you a dress, too, my Cinderella. Do you not see, upon this chair?"

"Thanks to you, godmother, whoever you are!" cried the young girl, springing for the neat gingham dress awaiting her disposal. "I



wonder what my maid Margueretta would say to this," she continued, quite ready to laugh, as she was fastened into it by her companion; for Nettie was a dainty little creature, only as petite as she was graceful, and the sleeves nearly covered her hands, the skirt flowed along the floor, and the waist was full "a world" too large. "I had such quantities of pretty dresses; and my beautiful Italian cameos, and my Geneva watch, and my little French dressing-case, and—and— Dear! what do you suppose papa will say to all that?"

Jessie smiled rather distressedly at her friend's merry complaints; she was thinking with dismay of her own lost wardrobe, which her poverty would prevent her replacing. Her purse was safe in her pocket, the bank-bills looking good, though woe-begone, and the four eagles shining brightly upon her misfortunes, as if promising to make all right.

A rap at the door admitted Mr. Carolyn to their counsels. There was a discussion of ways and means. Most of the gentlemen had concluded to wait until the next morning before taking the stage for Buffalo, to allow the ladies time to recruit their strength and dresses. As every one else had dined, these three now had a quiet dinner in their parlor up-stairs, where they were waited upon by a neat-looking, but not very delicately-sized girl, whose pink gingham she was sure she had on. She therefore refrained from any comical remarks upon her own appearance, and both the gentle guests were careful to make a great many grateful remarks upon the attentions they had received and the comfort which they experienced thereby.

Jessie was rejoiced to learn that her trunk had been washed ashore, and was standing in the hall below. It was brought up, after dinner was removed, and opened. Many things were injured by the water, and others were quite safe. "I'll tell you what I think we can do, Miss Carolyn. Here is one of my tightest dresses; by putting a tuck in the facing, and taking it in under the arms, it will do very well for you to get home in."

"Oh, that will be nice, decidedly. It's a pretty dress, too. But how can we alter it? We will have to have a seamstress."

"Not any such person. You can run a straight tuck in the facing, can you not, if I baste it for you?"

"I suppose I can, if I have a needle and thimble," replied Nettie, dubiously.

"Well, I can do the rest. In the course of an hour we will have a dress in which you can go out in search for some bonnets."

In diving to the bottom of her trunk for the box containing her sewing implements, a precious packet of trifles, which she had saved in remembrance of her mother, was brought up—a handkerchief exquisitely embroidered by those now mouldering hands, a long tress of beautiful hair, and a dozen such sacred mementos. The exciting scenes of the present were entirely forgotten; her heart flew back to the cottage, the sick-chamber, and the grave—that grave which she had planted with the choicest roses before she left it; so long she sat holding the packet in her hands, with the tears gliding silently down her cheeks, that Nettie was fain to recall her, by a soft pressure of her arms and a kiss, back from her melancholy musings. "If I had lost *this*," she said, passionately pressing it to her lips, "or *this*—and she drew a double locket from her bosom. "Oh, Nettie, see what cause I have for tears!"

Her companion took the locket, and gazed upon the fair and noble countenance depicted within it with admiration. "It is your mother's, and so much like you, so beautiful. I, too, am an orphan, and my mother was good and lovely."

"You have still a father," said Jessie; "you are not such an orphan as I am. Look upon this other side."

"It is a fine-looking face, smiling and handsome, but not so full of character as your mother's."

"It was like my father in his best days." And Jessie returned the locket to her bosom, and went steadily to her task.

In a short time the dress was remodelled, and Nettie had it on. The two girls, with several other ladies, went forth upon a shopping excursion to the one or two stores of that country place, which had never been so flooded with customers before. Some plain straw bonnets, not precisely in the latest style, with a bit of ribbon for capes and strings, some shoes not so elegant as the tiny gaiters Nettie left in the flames, a few handkerchiefs and pairs of lisle-thread gloves, were the amount of their purchases. Miss Carolyn's purse had been left in her state-room, but her brother had secured his, with the most of his wearing apparel. His beautiful linen was not among these, however, nor his faultless hat; so, when he gravely smiled upon his sister and her new friend, as they tried on their bonnets, they were at liberty to return the smile upon the coarse straw hat and downcast collar in which he was compelled to ride to Buffalo.

The next day the coach took a crowded and forlorn-looking set of passengers to that city,

where Mr. Carolyn was happy to replenish his wardrobe. Very glad they were, next day, to find themselves nearing New York. As the boat swept up the river, and thoughts of parting with her new friend came into the pretty head of Miss Carolyn, she set about making arrangements for a further acquaintance.

"Are you going to remain in the city any time? Because, if you are, I shall want to see you often, Miss Turner."

"I shall be with my uncle's family several months. My uncle is Dr. Stanton, of — Place."

"Why, that is charming! Dr. Stanton and papa are excellent friends; our house stands opposite to his, but we only reside there in the winter. We are going now to our country-seat, farther up the Hudson; our housekeeper had it in order a week ago. The first time that I return to town I shall take you back with me to stay a long time. We have a delightful place; you will like it better than the dusty city, I am sure." Jessie smiled upon her ardent, but graceful friend so sadly that she reiterated with kisses her kind wishes. "We will try and make you forget those sad looks when you come to us, darling. I love you already, and I have no doubt but that papa will be charmed with you. You are just the person to please him; I am too wild. He will like you the most, because he will not have to keep saying, 'Jessie, my dear, do be a little more womanly!'" The fairy speaker did not look at that moment as if there was any danger of anybody's not liking her enough. "Lewis will love you, too, will you not?"—turning to him, with mischief laughing in her eyes.

A faint flush mounted to the white forehead of the one addressed, and he turned his glance from his sister's bewitching face to the pensive and innocent countenance of her companion with sudden earnestness; his tone, however, was only polite:—

"If you persuade Miss Turner to give us the pleasure of a visit, we will endeavor to have Glen-Carolyn wear its coolest and fairest looks for her. But we must not promise too much, lest in the fulfilment we leave our fair guest disappointed."

"Oh, I know we shall be happy!" exclaimed the ardent Nettie, with a hug of Jessie's slender waist.

"You would compel me into happiness if any one could, I have no doubt," replied that person, returning her embrace.

"And now I must part from you, sweet sharer

of the perils of this voyage," continued Nettie, as the boat stopped at the landing. "I see Dr. Stanton's carriage and coat-of-arms, with that respectable Cæsar upon the box; to him my brother will give you in charge. A thousand thanks for the loan of your dress, and I will return it by some safe messenger, to-morrow. Good-by!"—with a kiss.

Jessie was placed in the carriage which awaited her, smiled gratefully upon Mr. Carolyn as she bade him adieu, and fully realized how very desolate she felt as she was slowly borne, through the crush of vehicles, up into the great city. She did not expect that heart-felt welcome which alone could restore her drooping spirits, worn out with sickness and anxiety; and she felt more frightened than rejoiced when the carriage stopped.

## CHAPTER VI.

A TELEGRAPH from Jessie, after the burning of the boat, had apprised the Stantons of her safety and of the time when she might be expected; so they sent their carriage to the landing for her, and were now awaiting her arrival in the breakfast-parlor.

"It was the most inconsiderate move that I ever knew you to make, mother, sending for this Western cousin to spend a whole year with us," said Miss Stanton, an expression as near ill-humor as anything else upon her face, which she never allowed to be marred in its cold and well-bred inanimateness by any well-defined expression. "Doubtless she will expect to go to the springs with us, next month, and to share all our privileges—at our expense, too. It will be pleasant, I am sure, to be followed everlastingly by a little, sunburnt, country sewing-girl, in a constant state of wonderment at everything she beholds."

Mrs. Stanton did not like to have her daughter consider any movement of hers as ill-timed; she replied, with some dignity and more sarcasm: "If you will remember back six years, my dear Miriam, you will find that my brother's child was then full as accomplished and much prettier than yourself. Do you forget how she mortified you by talking French with your governess so much better than you? I do not think any child who belonged to my dear dead brother can be very awkward. As for the springs, she is such a young thing yet she will be quite contented to stay at home with Julie. She is entirely too young to bring out, and in deep mourning, too, and will need but a trifling allowance."

"Hurrah, Minnie!" cried Tom, catching that little one in his arms, "the children are to be left at home to play puss in the corner, all by themselves. Jessie, and Julia, and you, and I—no! there will not be enough for that game, unless father consents to play puss."

"Papa play puss!" shouted the child, highly delighted with the idea. "What would he say to hear that?"

"If I am to stay at home at study over these stupid books forever, I shall be very glad to have company," remarked Julie, glancing up from her Spanish, and tossing back her nut-brown curls from a forehead as white as snow.

"Well, no one need expect that I shall exert myself to be entertaining," said Miriam, languidly.

"You are always that, without exertion," replied Tom, contemptuously. "But, mind you, my fine lady, if I find you are not, at least, civil to my pretty cousin, I will have my revenge! so take care!" Here he made a tragic gesture, and Miriam shuddered.

"That horrid fellow will be the death of me yet. My nerves have been in a quiver ever since he came home from college. What a thing it is to be distressed with a rude, saucy brother!"

"You don't appear to have such a dread of all the male gender. There's that Polish count, Lemonpunchwhiskey, who doesn't frighten you a bit with his sword and his imperial. I do believe you can listen to his marvellous accounts of sabring the enemy with much more equanimity than you can hear me tell how many chickens came to an untimely end during my sojourn at old Yale. A fig upon women! if they are all like one or two that I know, I shall not desire a very extensive acquaintance."

"Lemonpunchwhiskey! I would not soil my lips with such vulgar attempts at wit as that"—a faint flush of scorn breaking into her pale cheeks.

Tom, who was a fine, affectionate fellow to those who were frank and generous with him, delighted in nothing so much as in getting his elegant sister too angry for dignified repose; and now that the war was really begun, it might have gone on until she was in hysterics if Minnie, who had been peeping from the drawing-room windows, had not announced that the carriage had returned. As it behooved Miss Stanton to impress her country cousin with a sense of her perfection, she suddenly relapsed into repose.

The next moment, a servant threw open the door, and Jessie Turner stood in the presence

of her relatives. Mrs. Stanton advanced with more cordiality than she had intended, for that innocent, exquisite countenance really touched her heart. She folded her arms about her niece, and gave her quite a kindly kiss. Miriam arose and came forward with a sweet smile, lightly touching her lips to those of her cousin.

The ardent Julie hugged and kissed her so heartily, and Tom shook hands so warmly, venturing to salute her, too, and Minnie sidled up to her so lovingly, that the poor child was all in tears.

The tears and the mourning garments set Julie to crying a little, out of sympathy, while Tom sat down by the window, and wondered how he had ever dared to kiss that adorably beautiful being. He was madly in love in less than three minutes.

"You must excuse me," said Jessie, with her pleading smile, as her aunt placed her in an arm-chair and untied her hat, "but you are all so kind, and I have been so lonely!" And here she cried again, but recovered her composure soon.

"Yours has been an irreparable loss, my child; but I will try and be a good aunt, if I cannot hope to be a mother to you."

Jessie looked up gratefully to the brilliant lady who said this so soothingly, feeling that she should love her new relations very much, after all.

Miriam asked her one or two questions about her journey, while Tom and Julie sank into a silent fit of admiration. Excitement had brought up that lovely bloom which emotion always brought to her cheeks, her eyes glowed tenderly through their wet lashes, while her black dress deepened their pensive effect.

"Tell me all about that boat that was burned up," said Minnie, leaning against her brother, and eyeing her with favorable looks.

"Not now, dear," interposed her mother; "wait until your father comes to dinner, and then we can all listen; your cousin is too much fatigued. Dr. Stanton was called away, this morning, and will not be at home until three o'clock. Would you like to go to your room and rest, or will you have lunch first?"

Jessie declined eating, but was very glad to have an opportunity of quietly resting. Her trunk was carried up and placed in a large closet off a cool and well-furnished chamber, to which she was conducted by Julie.

"You will have three hours for sleep; and then shall I come up and help you dress?"

Mother and Miriam have a lady's maid; but you will let me be yours, will you not?"

Asmiling acceptance of this offer, and she went down stairs very contentedly to her Spanish, while our young traveller, finding a bath-room part of the accessories to her comfort, bathed the dust from her wearied form, and crept, with a rich sense of comfort, upon the luxurious bed, the touch of whose cool linen soon won her into repose. From a long and refreshing sleep she awoke to find her self-elected attendant sitting at the foot of the bed, gazing at her as steadily as an enchantress.

"I came to wake you, but you were sleeping so sweetly I could not bear to disturb you. You were as pale as a lily while you were asleep. Are you sick?"

"O no, not sick; but I have not been quite rested since I watched with my dear mother. How much time have I to dress?"

"Half an hour, at least."

She permitted Julie to part and arrange her beautiful hair, who seemed to like the task, and went into raptures over its fineness and profusion, and the ease with which she could brush it into curls.

"Why, this is quite a decent dress, and made almost like Miriam's. She was afraid that your dresses would be old-fashioned. This is rather a queer-looking hat, though. Do they wear such now where you came from?"

"Some people may, for all that I am aware of; however, I did not leave home with that. I purchased this since the boat disaster, nearer to the fashionable world than my old one."

Although this was spoken with a smile, Julie fancied there was a gentle reproof in her cousin's tone, and, fearing that she had been more inquisitive than polite, she colored and was silent.

The new-comer's toilet was easily made, and she descended to the parlor to join the family circle. Dr. Stanton had not yet come home, and, during the few moments which elapsed before he entered, two pairs of critical eyes were very busy with the fair guest, while two pairs of lips said pleasant things. There was nothing in the plain mourning-dress, as it was made in the prevailing mode, to find fault with, and the little standing ruffs of crimped white crape were, at least, without pretension; as for the air with which they were worn, it was one of modest refinement. The voice was low and well modulated, the choice of words unaffected and good.

"We shall have no reason to be ashamed of her," thought Miriam. "But she has a worse

fault than it would have been to have a rustic air; she is too beautiful. If she stays here until next winter, she will be thinking she must go into society."

"She will be a splendid woman if she remains under my tuition for a while," thought Mrs. Stanton. "If I had not daughters of my own, I should like the bringing out of such a girl as that."

Dr. Stanton now came in. He received his niece with his peculiar, grave manner, and she would have thought his welcome painfully cold had not something affectionate in his earnest look into her face spoken more than his words.

As she sat at the faultlessly appointed table, her thoughts rushed back to her childhood, when a servant stood behind her chair, and silver and porcelain graced the board at which her father presided. She followed the swift track from thence to the time when she had waited upon others in that old country inn, and thus through her varied fortunes.

Again little Minnie called for an account of the burning boat, and the cousin related her adventures with feeling and effect. Julie cried from merely hearing of the dangers, Miriam started and colored when Lewis Carolyn's name was mentioned, and Dr. Stanton expressed his gratitude to Providence for his niece's escape, and praised the self-possession of Mr. Carolyn. "He is a fine young man. I am glad you have formed an acquaintance with him and his sister."

Although Jessie told her story with much modesty, Mrs. Stanton could not but conjecture that she had made a favorable impression on her neighbors from her receiving an invitation to visit them.

"The Carolyns are unexceptionable friends," she said. "They are the very first family in our circle—perfect people."

Miriam's heart was burning with bitter envy as she looked into her cousin's ingenuous face, and felt that she had already got farther into the "good graces" of Lewis Carolyn than she had ever done, though the chief object of her existence, since his return from Europe, had been to please him; while Jessie was only thinking that, if they were the most formidable people she should have to meet in New York, she should get along very well. Despite Nettie's childish gayety, she had recognized in her a fairy embodiment of grace and good taste, while her brother she had long ago set up in her fancy as the model of a true and courtly gentleman.

Altogether, the first day in her new home

passed away more pleasantly than she had anticipated. She admired her aunt and Miriam, felt at ease with Tom, was petted by Julie, loved little Minnie, and respected her uncle. She shared Miriam's room, an arrangement that would have been agreeable, had there been any cordiality in their intercourse; but that young lady never descended from her pedestal of formality, which, contrasted with the vivacity of Nettie Carolyn's equally high-toned manner, showed the meagreness of a mind which sheltered its own narrowness in the full-flowing garments of pride. Jessie, of course, was too inexperienced to read this at a glance, but the truth forced itself slowly upon her comprehension, when she found that her cousin could privately indulge an unladylike spirit, and then the manner ceased to dazzle her.

Miriam did not hesitate to aim many keen arrows at the sensitive soul of her companion. Glittering with dainty words as they were, they were sure to reach the heart for which they were intended; and Jessie often shrank from them, though she was too generous to use the true wit with which Nature had gifted her, in return; so that, although Mrs. Stanton was always kind, and the rest of the cousins affectionate, she was often driven to some quiet chamber, to hide her loneliness. She was almost glad when her aunt disclosed her plan of taking Miriam with her to the Springs, and leaving her and Julie to keep house for the Doctor, who was not going to be able to leave his engagements that season; she expressed her more than willingness to remain with her uncle. As for Miriam, she did not show her usual eagerness to hurry off to a fashionable summer resort; she was haunted by the idea of the visit which Jessie would probably make to the Carolyns in her absence, and she would rather have gone with her there than to have spent a season at Newport.

Julie assured Jessie, in confidence, that they would have glorious times—that she herself was father's pet, and that he always took her to a thousand places when mother and Miriam were away from home. Then there would be the whole of the house to themselves, part of the servants dismissed, Tom strolling about town, and only Minnie, who would not tease them *much*. They would spy into all the odd corners, and climb to the very top of the library shelves; they would not have to dress for dinner, and she should drop all her studies except Spanish and music.

Jessie laughed at the merry young thing, and believed that there might be a great deal

of pleasure in being left with such a huge library, such a free range of rooms, and in studying music and Spanish with her cousin; likewise in listening to the nonsense of Thomas, who was full of all kinds of wit and fun, classical and nonsensical, mixing up boyish folly and genuine talent so much together that she seldom grew tired of his lavishly bestowed company. He never hectored her, as he did Miriam; he had conceived for her a profound respect and a laughable kind of sentimental regard. Most and dearest of all, she hoped for hours of quiet musing in her own chamber—time to think over and treasure up her mother's teachings—time to attempt something again in a literary way, with a view to her future support. She wrote every week to Mrs. G——, inclosing letters to Percy, who was trying faithfully to learn to write, that he might answer them.

After two or three weeks, the two pleasure-seekers were away, with a party of their friends, and Jessie was instituted the director of home offices, a situation her former experience rendered her competent to fill.

## CHAPTER VII.

MRS. AND MISS STANTON had been away nearly a week, when one day Miss Carolyn presented herself. Julie made a stout opposition to her plan of carrying off her cousin, representing elegantly the delightful times they were having—how Jessie presided at the table, how they studied and read together, how Tom was always at their service to go with them everywhere. Miss Carolyn was little, but she was wilful, and the only compromise she would make was to stay that day and night with them. Her father's house stood opposite; she had brought along the keys, so as to have a peep into its darkened recesses. She invited the cousins to accompany her, and the three girls, giving Thomas a plain hint that he would be in the way, went over to the deserted mansion, and spent several hours within its dim precincts. It was rare enjoyment for them to go wandering through the large and beautiful house, peeping at veiled statues and into closets and drawers, rummaging among cast-off finery, until undoubted sensations of hunger admonished them of the dinner-hour.

Dr. Stanton was glad to see the sunshiny Nettie, but Tom chose to be rather preoccupied with his dish of green peas, in revenge for the slight of the morning.

After dinner, they returned to their exploring

expedition, which ended in Nettie's chamber, where the afternoon was disposed of in lounging upon the rich carpet and talking girlish philosophy. After debating whether the romance of sleeping that night in the deserted house would reward them for the dangers they would incur in case of robbers, they returned to Dr. Stanton's to tea, where they were joined by Lewis Carolyn, who had been busy in the city through the day, and a pleasant evening was enjoyed.

The next morning, Jessie went with the brother and sister to their summer home. Despite the sadness which, in her gayest moments, still hovered about her, she could not but enjoy her brief ride up the beautiful Hudson. Young Carolyn was content to lean almost silently against the railing of the deck, and watch the radiant glow of delight steal out from the gloom of those beautiful features, like a star breaking through a silver cloud. A carriage was waiting for them at the landing of a little village where the boat touched, and they drove about a mile along the river, winding along a charming road amid the hills, until they arrived at Glen-Carolyn. The house itself stood upon an eminence commanding a view of the river, but at its feet, and off to one side, lay one of the loveliest little glens whose natural beauty was ever heightened by the art of man. The mansion itself was a gem to Jessie; she enjoyed everything with the intensity of a poetic nature. It was not a large house, but exquisitely finished. The stained glass in the hall window was a piece of fine art, as was the mosaic of the floor. The one large parlor was octagon in shape, and every article in it seemed chosen equally for beauty and appropriateness. There was a delightful vista through the hall and library, opening at one extremity upon the hills, through a large bay window, and at the other upon the river. The breakfast-room was a cool, delicious place, beautiful with birds and flowers, and with profuse draperies of embroidered India mull fluttering in the morning breezes which stole from the flower-garden beneath. Nettie's own room was a bower of beauty, with that air of graceful negligence which distinguished her own ways.

The elder Mr. Carolyn was regarded by the young girl with a mingled feeling of affection and reverence. She watched for every word which fell from his lips, and felt honored by the friendly interest with which he conversed with her upon a thousand subjects, where at best she could only be a good listener. He was a fine-looking man of fifty, small, slight,

but with an intellectual head, brilliant, soul-searching eyes, and a voice sweet-toned almost as his daughter's. He was a scholar, a sincere Christian in the true spirit of Christianity, and a man of real genius. Jessie seemed to gain a clearer power of perception when attending to any subject to which he directed her. He had an ear for every delicate sound, and an eye for everything curious or beautiful.

"I declare, Jessie, we are both desperately jealous of papa!" exclaimed Nettie, one day. "Here you have never turned your eyes from him for the last two hours, but hung as gracefully upon every word as one of those spiders he has been talking about upon a thread of its own spinning. One would think there was nothing so interesting as those disagreeable creatures. I have read the *Journal* through twice, and shuddered twenty times at the subject of your conversation; I have brushed away a dozen imaginary centipedes. There sits Lewis, gazing at you like one of those selfsame spiders at a fly, his mouth wide open, ready to devour you. Really, papa, you are a very fascinating man, for just remark what an electric chain runs through the family circle. I have been looking at Lewis, he has been looking at Jessie, and she at you. Jessie thinks you are a nice lump of sugar, Lewis thinks she is a pretty little fly, and I think him a very dangerous spider; I, you know, am a tree-toad."

"What irremediable nonsense!" muttered Lewis.

"I have concluded," said Mr. Carolyn, gravely, "that, if you do not improve, my wild Nettie, I shall give you away, and adopt this little girl in your place, who is both witty and sensible."

"Oh, do, if you please, papa! it would delight your sedate, melancholy son. How you would love such a sister, wouldn't you, Lewis?" said the mischievous girl, with a provoking little laugh.

"Yes, I think I should love her very much"—turning suddenly towards Jessie, who was blushing, she hardly knew why, beneath Nettie's laughing glance.

Something there was in the earnestness of the accent which made the father look up, first at his son and then at the fair girl by his side. The glowing glance of the one and the roseate hue upon the cheek of the other opened a new vista before his mental gaze, and he sank back into his easy-chair with a thoughtful smile. Nettie commenced playing vehemently upon the piano, and both the gentlemen fell into a reverie. Jessie, in the mean time, turned to the

various journals which a servant had brought from the post. The younger Carolyn, as soon as she became absorbed in their pages, resumed the study of her countenance, over which he suddenly saw breaking so bright a blush and smile that, as soon as she laid aside the paper she was then perusing, he took it up, and turned to the corner which had excited his curiosity. There was nothing there saving a sweet poem, prefaced with some kind remarks by the editor; but the signature "Jessie T." revealed to him the author. He had previously remarked the fresh, delightful thoughts of the same author, without thinking who she might be, and his admiration was not lessened, now that he had learned. He gave the lines to his father, and pointed out Jessie as their author. Mr. Carolyn also appeared pleased with the discovery; his fine eyes lighted up with their most benign expression, as they rested upon the noble and delicate countenance of his guest.

"Will you not lay aside your reading, and talk with me a little while, Miss Jessie?"

She was sitting upon an ottoman near by. He caused her to roll it nearer, because, as he said, he was going to have some very confidential conversation with her. She smilingly obeyed. The first question which he asked was—

"Why do you write? I will constitute myself your literary friend and father, and ask the question as one who has a right to know. Remember, you cannot have a better confidant in these matters."

She glanced at the journal he held, and saw that it had betrayed her; and, after a moment's hesitation, she said: "I shall be glad to have an adviser; I wished to make my uncle my confidant, but he is always so busy. I think, Mr. Carolyn, that I have about three reasons."

"Well, the first is? Go on!"

"That the spirit moves me."

"Very natural, but not satisfactory."

"The second is—please do not laugh at me—that I have hopes of some time writing something worthy—of improving. In truth, I may be a little bit ambitious."

"Bad, very, for a young woman. What is the third reason?"

"Why, sir, perhaps you do not know that I am compelled, that it is necessary for me to exert myself in some way, and I hope to get a living in the way most adapted to my wishes."

"Get a living?" said her questioner, with an incredulous look into her blushing face. "Fie! you could live upon moonbeams and rose-leaves, as for that matter. Get a living!

Who ever thought of such nonsense in connection with a sprite like you?"

"I assure you that I have," replied Jessie, earnestly. "Bread and meat are quite necessary to my existence, and the fairies have made no provision for supplying me with robes, as the lilies of the field are provided for, who toil not, neither do they spin. Besides, my little brother must be cared for."

Mr. Carolyn regarded her with increasing surprise. "What will you do if you do not succeed in a literary way?"

"I shall have to sew for two shillings a day."

"It depends upon these slight fingers to get a living for two people? You must write or you must sew! Pshaw! I wonder what Nettie, the baby, would think of that, were she in your place. I should as soon have thought of a rose calculating the profits of disposing of its dew-drops for pearls, as of you selling those little gems of feeling for money."

"But one must live," said the young girl, deprecatingly.

"There it is again! I do wonder if every spirit in this world of ours must be breathed upon by the breath of Mammon."

"I do not worship at the shrine of Mammon," replied Jessie, with an unwonted air of pride. "Gold is a necessity; one must have money, or starve. Is it better to fold my hands and sink down in beautiful indolence, or shall I cultivate the gifts which God has given me for a purpose, win a place in the world's respect, educate the brother thrown entirely upon me for protection, and so do my duty to myself, to him, to Heaven?"

Mr. Carolyn looked into her kindling eyes, and, kissing her forehead, said: "Dear child, you are right; yet I do not like to think that one as delicate and sensitive as you must struggle with the everyday hardness and ugliness of life. Some strong-minded and strong-handed young man ought to do that for you"—looking at Lewis, who was gazing out the window.

"Yes, but, Mr. Carolyn, it seems to me that it would be pleasant to feel able to take care of one's self, not to be *obliged* to accept any man's love for the living's sake, but to keep heart and hand free and busy until the right person should win them—not"—with a blush—"that I have thought much about such a matter, but so it seems to me at a first glance."

Lewis was listening intently, if his head was turned away.

"Well, then, if your ideas about that are unchangeable, what would you say to letting

me adopt you? You can be another daughter to me; I have always wanted two, and you can satisfy your ideas of duty by being very useful to me, indeed."

"You would let your generous heart play traitor to all worldly wisdom," replied Jessie, with a tearful smile. "The advantages of that plan would be all on one side; so you must not think of a thing like that. There is a home for me somewhere in the wilds of the West." For a moment her heart beat faster at thought of a home of ease and luxury in a family like this; but something in the fact that Lewis Carolyn would be an inmate of that family induced her unconsciously to repel the temptation. Wherefore? We are sure she would have found it impossible to tell. "Besides, you forget," she added, "that I have a brother."

"Would not the very best place for him be in a good school? and could you not, by having nothing to do but pursue your literary tastes at your leisure, make surer the prospect of keeping him in a school?"

"He is too much of a child yet to be intrusted to any but the hand of love. I could not be happy to abandon him to the influence of a school at his early age. No, I must take good care of my brother; personal care and watching must I give him."

"I fear you are incorrigible, unless I get some one more persuasive than myself to do the pleading."

"There is no one so irresistible as yourself, Mr. Carolyn, not even Nettie. You had best let me have my own way. Do not you know that wildwood birds always pine when shut up in gilded cages?"

"You think we wish to shut you up in a gilded cage, do you?" cried Nettie, deserting the piano, "as if the whole length of the Hudson River, the entire range of a four-story house in town, and a darling little nest out here in the hills, and a flight once a year to the top of the Catskill, and two or three to the sea-shore, could be called caging you! If this is not range enough in which to unfold the wings of your fancy, why, go back to your wilderness, you Indian maiden, Michigan rose, prairie bird, or whatever you may be."

"You so confuse me by your figures of speech that I know not whether I am bird or flower," laughed Jessie.

"You are either, or anything else that is pretty. You can't believe what a conquest you have achieved in taking the good-will of my father so by storm; but I knew you would, and so, papa, if you please, give me credit for

some talent in reading character, if I am such a little know-nothing. Now just say that you thank me for catching this nice gold-fish for you out of the sea of my adventures."

"I am a fish, also, am I?" queried Jessie.

"Yes," interposed Lewis, coming out of his trance of silence, "and it was I who fished you out of Lake Erie; so by all good rights you belong to me, and the rest of these people need make no claims." He said this in a tone of mock gravity, but there was a glow in his dark eyes which looked dangerously in earnest.

"I will admit that Lewis's claims are just, and will yield to him and to no one else, remember," added the father.

"I avow that I will not belong to any of you, since you give me no voice in the matter, but just talk of me as if I were an inanimate thing, and could not hear any of your foolish flatteries," cried their guest, with prettily assumed indignation. Thereupon she went out of the room with a grave face, to conceal a little flutter of the heart caused by the peculiar tone of Lewis's last remark.

He did not follow her, neither did he say anything else of the same kind during the remainder of her fortnight's visit; for Lewis Carolyn, when he was quite a youth, and thought all the world as candid as himself, had been deeply enamored of a vain woman, who had deceived him, and, though he had grown a better reader of character since then, he was resolved never to win his happiness by haste.

So at the end of a fortnight Jessie returned to her uncle's, happier than when she came away, yet ill at ease. She wrote a great deal and studied hard, for she was resolved to make good use of her "golden opportunities." Time passed rapidly until the return of Mrs. Stanton and Miriam from the Springs. A month later, the Carolyns returned to town, and there was much pleasant visiting between the families. Miriam was colder than ever to Jessie, who could see how strenuously she exerted herself to charm Lewis Carolyn, and who had no intention of standing in her way. It was this unkindness on the part of Miriam, who compelled her to feel like an intruder, combined with a growing desire to see Percy, whose letters pleaded with her to return to him, which made her consider if it would not be best to go back to her old home that very autumn. Gentle as she was, she was too proud to brook Miriam's superciliousness, and nothing prevented her resolution to return, except the fear that she could find nothing to do to support herself.



At this period of hesitation, she was decided by receiving a letter from Mrs. G——, who told her of a colony of very good people who were about to start for Minnesota, and intended to form there a settlement. There were two or three intelligent families among these, and, as there were a good many children among the emigrants, they wished to take out a teacher; they would give good wages and permanent employment. She had spoken of Miss Turner to them, and they had consented to make no other engagement until they heard from her. She wrote, and accepted the offer immediately. Better the sweets of hard-earned independence than the bitterness of standing in the way of others.

In less than a week from the time the resolution was taken, she was on her way to meet her appointment. She did not even see Lewis Carolyn to say good-by, he being out of the city during that week. It was hard for Jessie and Nettie to part; it seemed as if they would never complete their farewell. All the Stantons, except Miriam, were sorry to part with her. Tom was away at college, and could make no demonstration of his feeling; Julie and Minnie sobbed vehemently. Dr. Stanton went with his niece to the boat, and, just before he said good-by, he slipped a small package into her hand. "God bless you," he said, heartily, "and prosper you in whatever you undertake. If ever you are in want of anything, let me know. I am not so poor, if I have an extravagant family, but that I can do a little something now and then. You are a good girl, and we are sorry to let you go."

Jessie had long since discovered that beneath her nunc's formality was hidden a large heart, and now, when she saw the tears coming into his eyes, she threw her arms about his neck, and sobbed out her good-by.

When she looked at the package which he had given her, some time after the steamer was on its way, she found that it contained a hundred dollars—enough to provide Percy and herself with winter clothing, and to transport them to that distant home to which they were going, so that she need make no advance upon her wages to effect these things.

It was a joyful meeting between Jessie and Percy. She could not look long enough into his glad blue eyes, nor remark sufficiently how much he had grown, nor clasp him close enough to her heart. He had inherited his mother's delicate constitution, and she hoped much that the fine, cool air of the new Territory would make him more robust.

Her mother's grave! Once more she stood by it, and shed sorrowful tears, to water the roses which grew there.

She was very glad to learn, among other things, that James Goodall was paying particular attention to a very pretty girl who had come to the neighborhood since she left it. Clara was married.

Some time in October, the orphans bade farewell to the Four Corners, with all its dear and painful associations, and set out with the emigrants in search of new fortunes.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Jessie had been a school-teacher in Minnesota for nearly a year. At first, she had found her duties severe and even distasteful; but she persevered. Her wages were excellent, if her labor was hard; and out of school, especially in the summer season, she had many sources of exquisite spiritual enjoyment. That bloom of poetry which had always flourished in her young soul grew more beautiful every day. Lonely hours, spent in wandering through pathless woods, with only murmuring trees and strange wild flowers for company, served to chasten her sorrows, while ever she grew in love with nature and freedom. The bright evenings, with their long twilights, where the flush of sunset lingered until almost midnight, brought hours of sweet and solemn inspiration. Then she had sports that would seem rude to the dainty children of luxury. She would shoot an arrow like an Indian, and ride the wildest prairie steed which could be caught. There was no danger in the fullest enjoyment of the pure outdoor air, where the most sensitive lungs were soothed and strengthened. Her health improved constantly; her slender form rounded out into the most exquisite proportions, and the pale roses of grief were exchanged for those glowing as those she gathered in her morning walks.

What needed she more to love than that brave young brother, growing up in strength and beauty under her care? and secondly, the children who trooped so cheerfully to the flower-adorned log-cabin where they delighted to obey her gentle precepts? Indian children there were among her pupils, and she had a curiosity to study their characteristics, and find out what traits most distinguished them from their fairer companions. Great friends she made, in her winning way, of some of the Indian maidens, and many were the presents she received of

belts and baskets, reticules and moccasins; she would teach them, in return, to sew. Thus was her time fully occupied, yet with hours for quiet reflection. A teacher not only of human lore, but of divine, blessed with fine health, forgetful that there was such an institution as nerves, she was useful, and consequently not unhappy. Whether she should be contented to pass her life in this manner, she did not pause to ask herself, nor whether there was really any sphere more befitting her efforts than to be the teacher of wild children in a wild country. She felt that this was her mission for the present, and she would not question the future too closely.

It was Saturday, and a glorious October day. Jessie had no school, and, taking a dinner-basket and Percy for companions, she resolved to spend her holiday in the forest. On and on she rambled, sometimes singing, oftener quiet from pleasant reveries, the gorgeous leaves which had loosened from the branches overhead making a rustling music at every step, which she dearly liked to hear. Now Percy was by her side, now far ahead, or lagging as far behind. He had his amusement with the squirrels and nuts, so that both were happy.

Wearied at last with wandering, Jessie threw herself upon a knoll covered with threads of golden moss and scattered with rainbow leaves; and there she sat weaving a wreath from what she had gathered by the way—green sprays, red berries, autumn leaves. A small stream bubbled noisily over the rocks close by; through the half dismantled trees, when she glanced upward, a purple sky with fleecy clouds was visible. Every breath of the fragrant air gave pleasure, a pleasure so deep it became melancholy; and the young girl dropped her idle task, and, with head drooped upon her hand, gazed away through the vistas of the forest with eyes brimmed with speculative thoughts. The beauty of the hour was such that to enjoy it in loneliness was almost unbearable. "I am lonely, I am desolate," she murmured. "O for some one who would sit by my side and delight as I do in such scenes! O for Nettie Carolyn!" she cried, aloud.

Ah, self-deceiving Jessie! art sure that it is *Nettie* for whom thy heart is aching?

There were footsteps near, but, thinking them Percy's, she did not turn until a familiar voice exclaimed:—

"'Oh for Nettie Carolyn!' she is not here, but Lewis is, and loves as well as you can love a day and scene like this."

She sprang to her feet, and turned towards

him a face blushing with consciousness of the radiant joy which it exposed.

"Mr. Carolyn! How came you here?"

"May I not take Nettie's place?" he answered, stealing her hand into his own, and hardly able to refrain from drawing her to his breast, so much lovelier than ever had she grown. His face betrayed all that he did not say, and a sweet embarrassment made Jessie droop her eyes before his ardent glance. She knew from his manner that he had come on purpose to seek her before he told her so, and her heart throbbed like a frightened bird's. They sat down upon the knoll, and he talked on and on, giving her a chance to recover herself. He told her where he had been journeying, and what he had been doing since she left New York, and all about his father and Nettie; spoke of her letters to his sister, that he had read them, and so kept aware of what she was doing; and, after all these words, sat down, and gazed into her downcast face.

"Nettie sent word that you must have a vacation, and come and spend it with us," he said, in a lowered voice. "She has commissioned me to bring you. Will you go? If you will, I promise to come back with you, or do what you will. Will you go—as my wife? Remember how patient I have been—giving you a chance to know your own heart before I pressed my suit. This last has been a long, very long year to me, Jessie. What do you say?"

She did not say anything, but when she found courage to raise her eyes they spoke for her, and he was content.

By and by Percy came up, very hungry, for his dinner; the greater part of the contents of the basket were devoured by him, despite the other two persons being so much larger. They may have felt no earthly wants upon that day of happiness, for the child was permitted to dispose of the dinner as he thought best, and two or three of the nut-cakes were wasted in the vain attempt to coax a bright-eyed squirrel into a nearer vicinity.

There was not a trial of Jessie's life, except the death of her mother, that did not now resolve itself into a blessing, and that dear mother, she felt sure, if conscious of her newfound happiness, must approve of it and its bestower.

We have nothing to tell about the difficulty of finding a teacher to take Jessie's school, about the delight of Percy at the idea of a journey to the city, nor even about the wedding taking place in a log-cabin. We only know

**that in all the breadth and depth of all the  
Territories of the United States there was not  
another so deserving, so beautiful, nor so deeply**

**happy a couple as the one that sat on that  
golden and scarlet broidered knoll in the forest  
that mellow October afternoon.**

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